

Practicall  
DIVINITIE:  
O R,  
GOSPEL-LIGHT  
*Shining forth*

In severall choyce SERMONS,  
On divers Texts of Scripture.

- Viz. {
1. *The Misery of earthly thoughts, on Isa. 55. 7.*
  2. *A Sermon of self-denial, on Luke 9. 23.*
  3. *The Efficacie of importunate prayer in two Sermons, on Luke 11. 9.*
  4. *The necessity of Gospel obedience, in two Sermons on Collos. 1. 10.*
  5. *A Caveat against late repentance, on Luke 23. 24.*
  6. *The Sovereign vertue of the Gospel, on Psal. 147. 3.*
  7. *A Funeral Sermon, on Isa. 57. 1.*

Preached by that laborious and faithfull Messenger of Christ, WILLIAM FENNER, sometimes Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in Cambridge, and late Minister of *Rockford* in *Essex*.

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## To the Reader.

*Christian Reader,*

**T**HE Author of the Sermons now in thy hand, was known unto many, (and to my selfe in part) for a man of an absolute composition & temper to make a Minister of the Gospel, in respect of two soveraign ingredients; *light* and *heat*, eminencie of knowledge in the things of God, together with strength and fervencie of zeale for the managing of this knowledge to the best advantage for the glory of God. So that that crowne of honour which our Saviour himself set upon the head of *John* the Baptist, would verry well, without any anoynting of flattery, have fitted his : *He was a burning and a shining light* (a). And though his sents and mine doe not walk together thorough every particular touch'd in the Sermons following; yet doe I judge the perusall of them, a worthy recompence for any mans

*John 5.*  
35

## To the Reader.

time and labour that shall be bestowed thereon.

The God of peace give us in his time union of judgements in the Truth : and in the mean time union of affections in that which is good. If we really and cordially love peace and not our own minds & wils, thorough a mistake instead of it, most certain it is, that we will not suffer it to be taken from us by the hand of any difference in judgement whatsoever. I doe but keep thy heart and spirit from better company in the Sermons following by my Epistle. But that which hinders thee in this behalf, shall be immediately taken out of the way, after the speaking of this one word : Read, understand, and consider : and thy soul shall prosper, and the grace of God in Christ shall be thy portion.

*Thine in the service of  
Truth and Peace*

Coleman-street  
London. Feb. 5.

1646.

JOHN GOODWIN.



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## THE MISERY OF Earthly Thoughts.

ISA. 55. 7.

*Let the wicked forsake his way, and  
the unrighteous man his thoughts,  
and let him return unto the Lord,  
&c.*

**H**ave heretofore begun the  
Doctrine of the *Thoughts* of  
men; Now I desire to finish  
it. Whence we had this  
Point: that

*Those whose minds run habitually on earth-  
ly things, are yet in the state of misery.*

First, Because a man is in the state of  
misery till he hath repented: Now, untill  
a man have forsaken his *old thoughts*, that  
man hath not repented. *Oh Jerusalem, wash*

B

thy

*Doctr.*

*thy heart*, Jer. 4. 14. A man must not only rid himself of vain thoughts, but he must wash his heart clean, with this Emphasis, *That he may be saved*: No salvation without this. *How long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?*

2. As a man is in the state of misery, till he have repented, so also till he is in Christ. Now when a man is led by his own *vain thoughts*, his *thoughts* being not sanctified; so long that man is not in Christ; if he were in Christ, Christ would sanctifie his *thoughts*. I, but may some man say, He hath wronged me, *ergo*, I will think thus and thus. Nay, but Christ casteth down the strong holds, and if thou wilt not yield, Christ will cast thee off; but if thou belong to Christ, he will cast all down before thee.

3. That man is in the state of misery, that doth not love God, that walks not with God in his thoughts. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. &c.* Mat. 22. 37. So I do, sayes one, and yet I think on my vanities too: And thus carnal men think they love God. But if thou love God with all thy heart, thou lovest him with all that is in thy heart; for what is a mans heart, but the purposes

purposes of his heart? Now if a man give not over vain purposes, he loves not God with all his heart.

4. That man that cannot forsake sinne, is in the state of misery, and can never enter into life; (see the Text) *the wicked must forsake his wayes*. A man must deny his own words, and speak according to Gods own warrant: the *actions* of mens lives are the wayes of their *thoughts*; the Tongue must not only *forsake his way*, but the Heart his way also; else a man is a wicked man, *Prov. 13. 26*. He is wicked whose *thoughts* are not sanctified. But what will men say? shal we be condemned for a *thought*? words are small sins, and *thoughts* are lesse: Must a man then so strictly look to his *thoughts*? I will make it plain, that for a man to be vain-thoughted, is a grievous sin.

1. Because if the sin of vain thoughts be pardoned, it will ask *abundance of mercy*.

Mark the Text; *Abundantly pardon*: No repentance, no mercy, without abundance; *ergo*, it is not so small as the world takes it to be.

2. Thoughts are the *sins of the highest part of a man*; for they are the sins of the heart; and surely the sins of the chiefest

part are greater then any other. A King counts it not much for a Rogue to steale by the wayes side, but for a Knight or a Nobleman it is a foul matter: So the Lord would not have the *lordly part* to sin against him; He would not have the *tongue*, much lesse the *heart*, that is the Kingly part of a man, to transgresse. And this is the reason why *Deborah* calls them *great thoughts of heart*, *Judg. 5. 15*. Sins in thought, are great sins: the Heart is the lady, the mistresse, or highest part of a man; and He that hath made us, looks that we should serve him with the the Master-part; That must be afforded him.

3. Because *thoughts* are breaches of every *Commandement*; Other sins are but against one, but all the *Commandements* condemn vain thoughts. The first *Commandement* saith, *Thou shalt have no other Gods but me*; But thou settest an Image up in thy heart, when thou thinkest of thy pleasures, &c. So, *Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day*: Now if thou think thine own thoughts that day, thou breakest this commandement; and so of all the rest: The sin of *thought* is therefore a hainous sin.

4. Because they are the strength of a  
mans

mans heart and foule, the first-born of original corruption. A man by nature is a child of wrath, a soul and a body of death. Now what doth the heart first break out in? It first shews it selfe in its thoughts; and if it be the first-borne, it must needs be the strength: as *Jacob* said to *Ruben* his first-born, he was his *strength*; and therefore all Lordship lies in the heart; A man may more easily part with all other sins then with this, because the bent of the heart runs this way; the heart will part with any sin, rather then with his pernicious *thoughts*.

5. Because they are the *dearest acts of men*. We count a man preferred, when he is preferred to the *thoughts* of a man, *Gen* 40.14. *Think on me*, saith *Joseph* to *Pharaohs* Butler: I count it thanks enough, if thou preferre me to thy *thoughts*. We prize that most, which we think most on; That which a man scorns, he scorns to bestow his *thoughts* on; but that which a man sets his heart on, that is his dearling. Now that any thing should be dear to a man, save God, this is a horrible sin; when a man makes his Dogs his dearling, his Whore his dearling, &c. For look what thou most thinkest on, that is thy dearling: Why? Because thou

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dandlest



dandlest it in thy heart; therefore it is a horrible sin for a man not to set his heart upon God.

*Obj.* But can a man live without *thoughts*? doth Grace call us to leave *thinking*? then a man must cease to be.

*Ans.* *Nem tollit, sed attollit naturam*; it takes them not away, but it takes them up. He doth not say, Let the wicked forsake *thoughts*, but *his thoughts*; let him set them on other matters. When God calls men unto him, he is so far from taking away mens thoughts, as that he will rather increase them. If thou be a new creature, thou must have more *thoughts*; Thou art full of *thoughts* now; but then thou wilt be fuller. *Psal. 119. 59.* When *David* turned to God, his heart *thought upon his wayes*; the word in the original is, *He thought on his wayes on both sides*. The curious work of the Sanctuary was wrought on both sides; Common works are wrought only on one side, but on the other side are full of ends and shreds. So the Prophet looks on *his way* on both sides; he strives to walk curiously, precisely, and accurately to turn himself to Gods testimonies. *Ergo*, God calls not to forsake *thoughts*, but *our thoughts*;

*thoughts*; it is a hard duty for men to forsake their own *thoughts*. I will make it appear thus :

First, Because it is a hard thing to reform *ones self*; one thing may reform another; but here is the difficulty, for a thing to reform it self: it is an easie matter for a mans *heart* to reform his *tongue*, but it is hard for the heart to reform it self, in correcting its own *thoughts*: it is hard for a man to deny himself. A hell-hound may reform his tongue; but here is the difficulty, for his heart to reform it self, for *thoughts* are are the heart, *Phil. 3. 19. who mind earthly things*; thoughts of earthly things are called the mind; a mans *thoughts* and his *mind* are all one, so that if it reform *thoughts* it must reform it self.

2. It is hard to reform *thoughts*, because they are *partial acts*; if they were full acts, a man might reform them, rather then being partial acts: my reason is, because they are in every action he doth; *thoughts* run on all mens actions; if *thoughts* were alone, men might mend them: but they busie themselves about all actions; if a man pray, *thoughts* run along with him in prayer, nay men pray with twisted *thoughts*,

so that before he comes to an end of his prayer, he shall have abundance of glances on other things. See it in old *Eli*, *1 Sam. 1*. *Hanna* was praying; Old *Eli*, saith the Text, *thought she had been drunken*. Either he was, or should have been praying also; yet you see he had wandring thoughts to mark the lips of his neighbours. So, as *John* was preaching, *Mat. 3*. there came a thought into his hearers hearts, that *they were the seed of Abraham*. What did make them think so? *John* spake of no such matter; but he said, *Every tree that brings not forth good fruit, &c.* They had, it seems, by-thoughts in the duty of hearing: therefore seeing thoughts do thus twist themselves about mens actions, hence it is that they are so hard to be rooted out.

3. It is hard for men to forsake their own thoughts, because they are in mens hearts, *Their inward thoughts*, *Psal. 49. 11*. Every man hath two kinde of thoughts, *inward*, and *outward*; *explicite*, and *implicite*; *implicite* thoughts are those that never shew themselves in the heart, but at some desperate attempt; *Explicite*, are those which are in the heart every day: as in *Psal. 49, 11*. *They think their Houses shall*

*shall continue for ever.* Would you think that men should have such thoughts; if their outward thoughts were, they were mortal; We see (saith the Text) *that men die, &c.* and yet they think inwardly *that they shall live for ever.* Now according to these inward thoughts men act; and hence it is that men neglect repentance, and other holy duties, as if God would never call them to an account; they have not these thoughts above-board, but they are inward, and these spoil the heart, and these are the causes why men cannot forsake their own thoughts. *Epiphanius* speaks of a fig-tree which grew in a wall, &c. Bad thoughts will be alwayes seizing on a man till he dies, and then *all his thoughts perish.* But so long as a man is alive in *old Adam*, these thoughts are rooted in the bottom of the soul, which hinder good duties; and this is the cause why vanity of mind sprouts up.

*Examine your selves then;* for it is one of the best wayes for a man to try his estate by, even to examine his thoughts. If a man would see whether the sea be salt, he need not drink all the water that is in it; one drop will serve his turn. So a man may see whether he be a child of God, or of the Devil,

*Use.*

Devil, even by his *thoughts*. I will make it appear by these Reasons :

First, because *mens thoughts are the free acts of their hearts*. Many times you speak not as you would, you do not as you would, but a man *thinks* always as he will. Favour of Great men, and desire to please them, makes men doe many times what they would not ; but *thoughts are free*. I may say so, and so, but I will think what I list : *Ergo*, if thou wilt *judge* a man, judge him by that he does *freely*, and not by that which he does by compulsion. But now thy *thoughts are free*, they are thine *own act* ; nothing can *force thy thoughts* but thy self : *ergo*, in them thy heart shews it self whether it be carnal or spiritual.

When *Peter* denied his Master, could a man have judged him by *that*, then he might have judged him an Apostata : but that was his *passion* ; he discovered what his *fear* was, not what his *heart* was ; For if a man might have but looked into *Peters* heart, (though it was a fearfull sin, and without Gods mercy might have damned him) Yet there you might have heard him say, *Oh it is my Master ! Oh that I had never come hither ! It is my Master and Saviour,*



*I have none but he.* It was for feare of his life, that he denied him : For, *Prov. 23. 7.* *As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.* A covetous Usurer may make a rich feast, and say with his tongue, Sir, you are welcome; he must give good words, the shame of the world and speech of people will make him do it; yet his *thoughts* it may be are not towards thee. So try thy self, how go thy *thoughts*? at home or abroad? Are thy *thoughts* on heaven or heavenly things, or are they below? Sure I am, if a mans *thoughts* were on heavenly things, then his heart would be there also; for *as a man thinks, saith he, Prov. 23. 7.*

2. As they are the freest acts, so they are the *immediate acts* of the heart. Can a man judge of the fountain by the water that runs seven miles off, as well as by that which runs immediately from it? The water seven miles off, may have tincture from the soyle, and so it may be bad there, though good at the fountains head; *ergo*, judge of the fountain by the water which comes immediately from it. Now, *thoughts* come immediately from the heart, nothing is between them and the heart, and *out of the heart* (saith our Saviour) *proceed evil thoughts,*

*thoughts, &c.* Mark 7. 21. Other sinnes come from the heart too; but it is at the second, third, or fourth hand; abundance of *circumstances* come between them and the act; as in the act of murder, it may be there were base words offered, yea and blows too, &c. but *thoughts* come immediately from the heart: *Ergo*, if thy *thoughts* be proud, carnal, &c. so art thou; if thy *thoughts* carry thee away in the cares of this life, so is thy heart, &c.

3. *Thoughts*, they are the *continued acts* of the heart, a man is alwayes doing them. Can a man judge of an Usurer, and say he is liberal, because he makes *one* great feast unto his neighbours? No; but he may say it is a *Usurers feast*, a great feast.

By what a man doth *alwayes*, by that judge him: Thou art not alwayes *praying*; &c. or in good company; but thou art *alwayes* thinking good or evil thoughts: thy thoughts are *continued acts* of thy heart. Can a man judge a horse for stumbling once in a long journey? At such a place he went well, and at such a time, and alwayes; yet perhaps once in a year he may stumble: Carry you, or will you judge him by that? No, rather judge him by that  
which

which he is alwayes doing. Thou art alwayes *thinking*; now that is thy *God* which thou art *alwayes* thinking on: If on riches, then that is thy god; or whatsoever it be, then that is thy god.

Examine then thy heart by thy *thoughts*; for out of the abundance of thy heart thy mouth speaketh: yea, for one *word*, there is abundance of *thoughts*; for one good duty, there is abundance of thoughts; *ergo* if thou wilt examine thy *heart*, examine thy *thoughts*.

4. Thoughts are the *Univocal acts* of the heart, such as wherein the heart shews its own nature. As for example: the Univocal act of Light is, to lighten the room: but now you cannot judge of the Light by the *heat*, so well as you may by the *shining*. So an ill savour must be judged of by the stinking, which is the univocal act of it: It causeth abundance of other effects, but this is the proper act whereby it shews itself. So the *thoughts* of men are the univocal acts of their hearts, therefore in Scripture called the *way of the heart*: just as the heart is, so are the thoughts: if the heart be proud, so are the thoughts: just according to the nature of the heart, so are the thoughts.

5. They

5. They are the *swiftest acts* of the heart. If I judge of a *Scholar*, I will judge him by that which he doth *ex tempore* : if a fool study, he may speak to purpose ; but look what a man doth by his own inclination, that a man discovers himself to be ; Thoughts are the *extempore acts* of the heart ; if thy heart be heavenly, it will scatter out heavenly meditations ; if carnal, then thy thoughts are carnal : *thoughts* are as the visions in the night, *ergo* we use this proverb, *his thoughts are gone a sutering*. If then they be the swiftest acts of mens hearts, then are they most fit to expresse the nature of the heart.

6. Thoughts are the *peculiar acts* of the heart, peculiar to God only : the world may see what thy *outward* life is, but thy *thoughts* God only sees ; neither Angel, Devil, nor Man can see them : and as they are *peculiar* to Gods eye, so he most regards what mens *thoughts* are ; and therefore the best way for a man to judge himself, is, to judge himself that way which God doth, even *by his thoughts*. The Lord knows the *thoughts of man*, Psal. 94. 11. Examine your selves in this then, concerning your *thoughts*, whether they be metamorphosed

or

or no : A man may say, he hath good thoughts of God ; but let him examine himself whether it be so or no,

7. Thoughts are the *conscional acts* of the heart ; they are the greatest accusers, or excusers of the heart : they are Consciences Nose, as we may so speak : True it is, the words of the tongue, and the actions of the hands, are all in the light and sight of the conscience ; but the neerer a thing is unto the conscience, the more able it is to judge of the conscience : And therefore Saint Paul puts the *accusing*, or *excusing*, especially on the thoughts, *Rom. 2. 15.*

We grant, a wicked man may have good thoughts, but they are thoughts *descending*, not *ascending* ; they are cast into the heart by God, not raised out of the heart. *Moses thought in his heart to visit his brethren*, Acts 7. ver. 23. Good thoughts grow out of the heart of the godly, they come from the bottome of it : a wicked man may have good thoughts *cast* into his minde, but he will fling them out again.

Secondly, we grant wicked men may have good thoughts ; but examine whether they be *close with the heart* or no ; all the proper



proper thoughts of a man, are the possessions of the heart, *Job 17.11*. They take hold of the heart, and they are at home in the heart. Here then examine thy heart, whether the thoughts of God *close* with thy heart: Doth repentance *close* with thy heart? dost thou think of death, and do the thoughts thereof make thee die daily? Or dost thou think of death, & dost thou not love to be holden with that thought? Dost thou think of hell, and wilt thou not be holden with that thought of hell, but thy thoughts are on thy pleasures? So then, if thy thoughts close not with thy heart, it is nothing to the purpose.

Thirdly, there may be good thoughts in thy heart, but tis questionable whether good thoughts, or no; if they come out of *due season*, it is nothing to the purpose: If a Printer print never so well, and make never so good letters; yet if he place one word where another should stand, he marrs all: So, good thoughts, if they be *seasonable*, and in their proper place, they are the effects of the *Spirit*; but if *out of season*, they may be the *thoughts* of Reprobates: As if thou be at Prayer, and then to be thinking of a Sermon, is nothing to the purpose. They

must



must be seasonable, and bring forth fruit in due season, *Psal. 1.3.* When thou art at prayer, thou must have thy thoughts futeable to prayer; for if thy thoughts be never so good, yet if they be not *seasonable* and *futeable* to the action thou hast in hand, they are not actions of grace; grace cannot away with them.

Fourthly, thou hast good thoughts in thy heart, but the question is *whether they be counselled thoughts, such as thou hast determined to think on.* Thoughts are called the counsels of a mans heart, *1 Cor. 4. 5.* it may be thou maiest stumble on a good thought now and then, it may be when thou art swearing, thou wilt say God forgive me; when thou hast been drinking all the day, it may be a good thought steps in and cries God mercy, but thou goest not to *schoole* to learne the *arte* of meditation, or the science of holy thinking, or to say with *David*, *O God my heart is fixed.*

*Now, if that sin in thought be so great a sin, this should teach us what a horrible sin it is to sin in deed; therefore thoughts are the smallest sins, and the Psalmist makes it an argument of Gods quick-sighted power to see*

Use 1.

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thoughts

thoughts, *thou seest my thoughts as farre off;* you will say that man is quick sighted that can see a pins head a 100 myles off: even so God sees thoughts; if a *pins* point can stab a man, then a *sword* can much more. Now if *thoughts* be so haynous and capitall a sin, how fearfull a sin is it to commit sinne in deed? for thee to sweare, to lye, to commit adultery, to keepe wicked company, to mocke at Gods people, to live in cove-  
teousnesse, &c. this is to commit in deed; if *small* sins be so damnable, what then are the *greatest*? If the cockatrice in the *egge* be such poyson, what will it be when it is *hatcht*? sins in *thought* are imperfect, but outward actions are perfect.

Tis a wicked distinction to say that some sins are *Contra legem* or *Præter legem*; for, all sins are against the Law, as Saint James saith, *when lust is conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished it bringeth forth death*; thou that art a drunkard, thy sin is *finished*; thou art a true sinner *in deed*, if thou livest in the *execution* of any outward sin.

Againe, sins in thought are *simple* sins; but sins in deed are *compounded*, sin in thought is part of sin, but when it is in deed,

deed. it may be the cause of a 1000 sins: for a man to think too much of his bellie is a sin; but for a man to be *drunken*, this is *abundance* of sins; for it is an abuse of Gods creatures, a spending of his substance, a weakning of his parts, a scandall to others; &c. Sin in deed is a sin with an *addition*; sin in deed is an *impudent* sin; see *Esay* 65. 2, 3. &c. that man is impudent with a witnes that will commit sin in deed, for he is neither ashamed of Gods nor mans presence; if any man be a desperate sinner, this is he.

But it may be objected, *how then can thoughts be said to be such sins, even sins of the highest part of a man?*

*Object.*

I answer, a Theife or Rogue hath burnt a mans dwelling house, yet he may proceed further and burn his stable too; a 1000 pound and a shilling are more then a 1000 pound; *Sins in thought are included within sins in deed.* The *souls* part of sin is the greatest part of sin; Now thoughts are the souls part of sin; yet sins in deed must needs be worse in regard of the *progresse* of sin, and also because thoughts are *included* in them; thoughts and deeds, are more then thoughts alone.

*Sol.*

Use 2. I exhort and desire you therefore  
to consider.

1. First, *what great reason you have to set your thoughts on God.* God himself merited this dutie at your hands, God hath taken a number of thoughts for us. *Innumerable are thy thoughts O God to us ward.* Ps. 40. 5. the Lord thinks on us from the Cradle to the Crosse; If the Lord should have intermitted his thought of thee, thou couldst not subsist; when thou wast up, the Lord thought how to feede thee; when thou wast in bed, he thought how to preserve thee; he doth not use to think of thee at one time and not at another, but he thinkes on thee when thou art sick, and when thou art in health, asleep or awake; the Devill else would seize on thee. *I am poore and needy, yet the Lord thinks on me,* saith the Psalmist, Psal. 40. 17. And *Nehemiah* saith, *O Lord think on me;* shall wee call to God to think on us? then surely it is our duty to thinke on him, yea and he may call to us for that duty.

2. Secondly, *consider with your selves what thought they are which God calls for;* my son, saith he, give me thy heart. Prov. 23. 26  
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He would faine have thy heart, he lets thee labour with thy hands for thy living, and he lets thee have thy feet to walk and the rest of thy members for thy severall uses, but the Lord requires thy heart, and therefore give him the thoughts of thy heart; for if thy neighbour cometo thee for fire, thou canst not give him fire, if thou take away the *heat* thereof; so give the Lord thy heart, and the thoughts of it will follow.

The Devill calls for thy heart also; *ergo* reason as *Ioseph* did when he was tempted, *how can I doe this and sin against my God? my Master hath delivered into my hands all that he hath, thee only excepted, and shall I take thee? how can I doe this?* So the Lord hath with-holden nothing from thee, but thy heart; *my sonne* (saith he) *give me thy heart*, yet wilt thou deny it him with the thoughts thereof.

Tell me you that are rich, would it be any *disparagement* unto you to be Gods servants, to set your thoughts on God? True it is the greater men of this world thinke it some *disparagement* to thinke on these things. But I tell thee thou that art a *Gentleman*, if thou have *grace*, it makes thee



more then a Gentleman; grace takes not away mens honor and riches, but if he be a *Knight*, it makes him more then a Knight; And as *Paul* said to *Philemon*, receive him now a servant and more then a servant; hee was a servant when hee was *carnall*, but now beeing a *Christian* he is more then a servant; if you have grace, it is an *addition* to your riches; *riches and more then riches*; ergo give your hearts to God, and it will be the better for you.

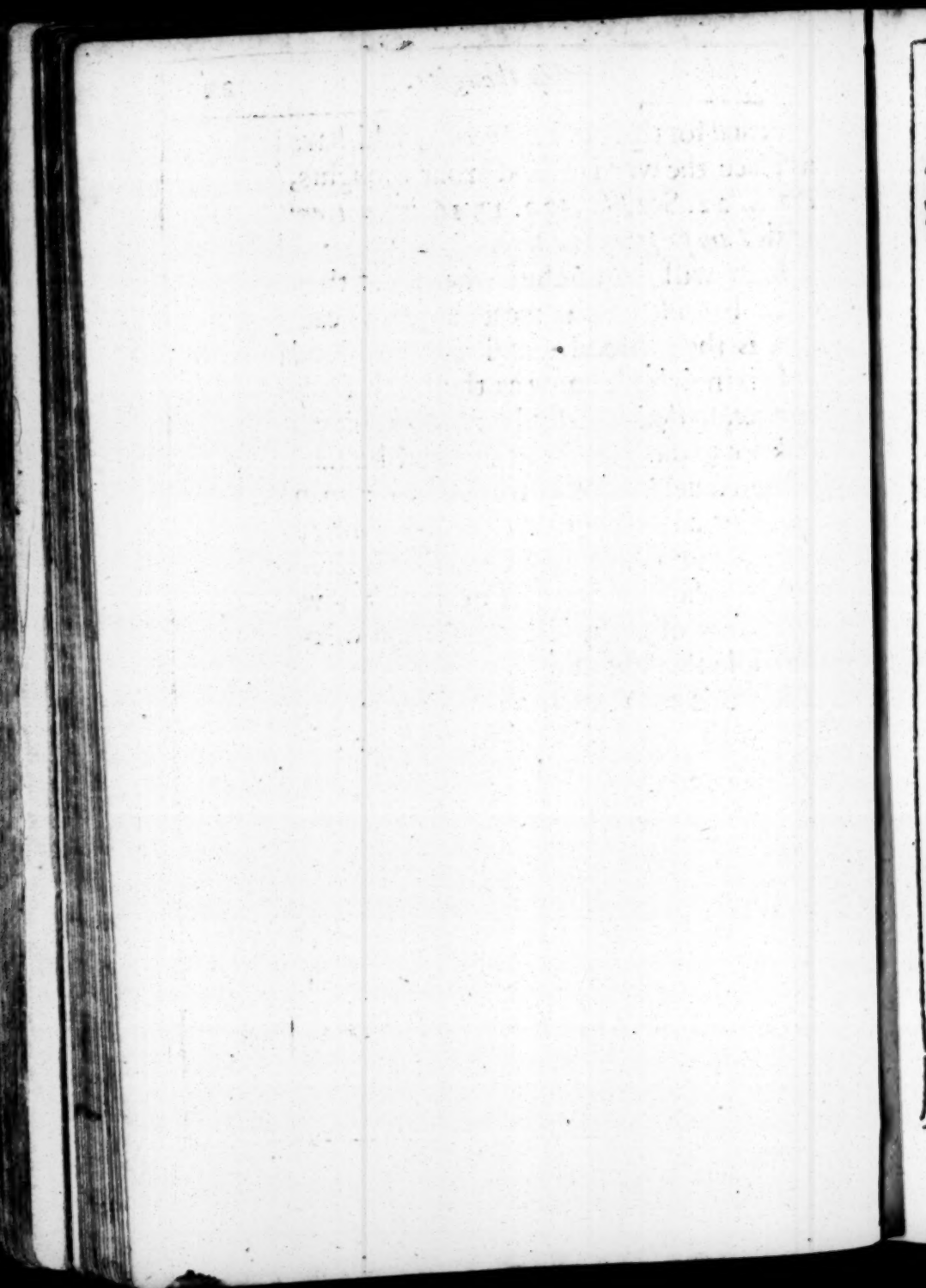
Thirdly, *the Lord hath made thy thoughts thy Jewels*, thy thoughts are precious, the Lord keepeth them under lock and key, hee will not let any see them; if all men should observe a man and look into him, yet they cannot see his *thoughts*; no; God hath lockt them up and made them thy *Jewel*; wilt thou then cast them into the myre? wilt thou preferre Haukes and Hounds in thy thoughts before God? canst thou sit at dinner and not once thinke of God, but alwayes on base pelfe? why thy thoughts are thy Jewels.

Againe, A man that is *Wise*, will be wary what *companions* he keeps: your thoughts are your *only* companions; you never go out nor in, but your *thoughts* go along with

you: and for this cause *Solomon* would have us place the word of God in our thoughts, *Pro. 6. 22. See Psal. 139. 15 16. when I am awake I am present with thee.*

Men will be carefull what meat they eate, because such meat as they eate such is their blood; and as their blood is, so is their body; now as the body feeds on *meat*, so doth the soul on *thoughts*; if we look not to our *thoughts*, they will be subject to abundance of corruptions; a man must give an account of *every idle word he speakes*, and thoughts are the *intrinsecall* words of the heart: now if men must give an account of every idle word, then of every idle thought also.

Let this then teach all and every one of us in the feare of God to consider our thoughts, else our end wil be destruction.





A  
SERMON  
OF  
SELF-DENIAL.

LUKE 9. 23.

*And he said unto them all, If any man  
will come after me, let him deny  
himself, and take up his crosse daily,  
and follow me.*



His Text contains the *first action* performed of every Christian, viz. *to deny himself*; concerning which you may here see,

First the *grounds* of it.

Secondly the *reasons* of it.

Thirdly

Thirdly, the *occasion* of it.

Fourthly, the *parts* of it.

Fifthly and lastly, the necessity of it.

I intend to handle these words as they are in relation to the context.

First, the *grounds* of this truth, viz that *every man must deny himselfe*. And it is here expressed to be twofold, viz. the contrariety that is between *Christ* and a *mans selfe*; mee, and *himself*; these two termes are contradictorie one to the other; *if any man will come after me, let him deny himself*; these two cannot stand together.

Secondly. The contrariety that is between *self* and *self*; if a man be in *Christ* he hath two selves; he hath a *self in himself*, and a *self out of himself*; the self in himselfe is *old Adam*; the other in *Christ*, which is the new *man*; there is self denying and selfe-denied; if a man will find himself, he must lose himself. *Paul* must not be found in *Paul* having his *owne righteousness*, but he must find himself in *Christ*; for, *salvation belongeth unto the Lord Psal.* 3. 8. And ergo let him deny himself.

Secondly, you may see the *reason* of it, which is *threesfold*.

*First,*



*First, Christs own example* verse 22. the son of man must suffer, must be rejected, Christ himself denyes himself; he might have commanded himselfe, hee might have demanded credit, honor, or riches, &c. he might have done thus; yet though he had no wicked self, but good self, yet he denyed *himself*; and therefore if we will goe after Christ, we must do to.

Secondly, *here is Christs merit*, he hath merited this dutie; Christ did not humble himselfe *for himselfe*, but he did it *for us*, and therefore we may well deny our selves for him. This is included in this word *And*. And if I have done this for you, I would have you doe the like for mee.

Thirdly, *here is Christs command too*; let him deny himself; Christ enjoynes this to all that will come after him, *let him deny himselfe*.

Now follows the occasion, and that is threefold.

First, *Peters offence*; when Christ had told *Peter* and the rest of his Apostles how that he must suffer; *Peter* was offended saying, *Master, favour thy selfe*; even like a servant that out of love to himselfe  
would

would be loth his Master should be troubled, because then he thinkes himselfe shall be troubled also; oh faith Christ, art thou offended at this? I tell thee, neither thou nor any other can come after mee unlesse you deny your selves. *If any man will come after me, &c.*

1. Secondly, *as Peter was offended, so also were the rest of the Apostles.* They were very sorrie, *Mat. 17. 22.* they thought to have gotten credit in the world, and riches and worldly preterment, and now it grieved them to heare that they must have a suffering kinde of trade of it; *ergo* Christ said not only to *Peter*, but to them all, *if any man, &c.*

3. Thirdly, *like as his Apostles, so likewise he did foresee that all the world will be offended at this;* for many would faine have Christ and their selfe-will too; but Christ gives a watch-word before-hand, *if any man will, &c.*

4. Fourthly, *the parts of it.* The whole dutie is this, *Let him deny himselfe.* Chrysostome on the text saith, not onely deny himselfe, but in the originall *deny away himselfe*; not onely deny credit, &c. but abhorre it; if it cannot be had but with the

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losse of Christ, we must not only barely deny selfe respects, but *abhorre* them and trample them under our feet:

The parts of this duty are two.

First, let him take up his crosse.

Secondly, let him deny himselfe and follow mee.

The first is opposed to *selfe-favouring*, the second to *selfe-doing*.

First, *let him take up his crosse*, let him not favour himselfe; hee must be content to part with selfe-means and maintenance, and selfe ends too; he must be content to part with all these; *hee that will come after me*, must lose many good friends, and many a good bit and sweet morsell to the flesh; *he that will come after mee*, must not stand upon these termes; suppose a crosse of disgrace, come, *take it up* and weare it as thy crowne, nay thou must be willing to take a crosse before it is offered, and when thou hast it, thou must be willing to bear it.

Secondly, *he must follow me too*; ones selfe will doe as ones selfe would have him; that is true; but you must *follow me*, not your selfe; looke to *me*, and frame your selves to walk in my steps, *take up my crosse, &c.*

Lastly,

Lastly, here is the *necessity* of it. It is absolute true a man may go to hell if he be so minded, he may follow himself to hell; but if a man tender his salvation, then here is an *hypotheticall* necessity, a necessity with an if.

First, if he mean to *come after me*, hee must take up his crosse and deny himselfe.

Secondly, if a man would *save* his life, he must *lose* it: if hee will *lose* it, he shall *save* it. If a man *will* keep his old relation, he may; but if he will find credit and life in *heaven*, hee must deny all *selfe-respects*.

Thirdly, if a man will gaine himselfe, let him deny himself. But what say some, how shall we live then? how then shall I hold up my head? These men would faine have the gaine of the world, but what is a man profitted, if he win the world and lose his soule? &c. verse 25. if you stand upon these termes, if you can *baulke* a commandement for selfe respects, you may lose your soules; but if you will save your soules, thus you must doe. Again the text saith, if a man be ashamed of me and of my word, of him shall the son of man be ashamed; *ergo* if ever you looke that the son of man should not be ashamed of you, *deny* yourselves.

Now

Now for the Exposition.

*Deny himself*; there is the difficulty. A man cannot deny himself, 2 *Tim.* 2. 13. for *affirmare & negare* are contradictions; *ergo* somewhat must be meant by *ones self*: yet by *ones self* is not meant the Devill, as *Micarius* would have it; for since man hath sinned, saith he, the Devill is got into him, and is as neer unto him as himself, he is another self within his own self, another heart within his own heart: *ergo*, if he will come after Christ, he must forsake the Devill; though this be true, yet this is not the meaning of the text.

But first, a mans *corrupt will, wit, reason*, and all a mans corrupt self must be put off. *Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, &c.* Ephes. 4. 22. which is a mans self. *Viz.* thou must lay aside the man that thou art, thou must not be the same man if thou wilt follow Christ, thou must be a new self in Christ.

2. Here is not only meant a mans corrupt will, wit, reason, and affections, but also *all mens lusts and corruptions*, all sinnes that cleave so close as if they were himself, as fornication, uncleanness, evill concupiscence, &c. *mortifie therefore your earthly*



*lie members, Colos. 3. 5. the Apostle accounts a mans lusts as close to him as his members; for untill a man be brought home to Christ, he and his sins are all one, he must deny himself, viz. all his lusts.*

3. Thirdly, By *selfe* is not onely meant a mans corrupt selfe as sinne and iniquity: but also a *mans good selfe in some respects*; not only sins, but also *Father, Mother, Children, Friends, &c.* yea, *life it self*, all, if they be hinderances to him from Christ, *so farre* he must deny all these, *may* grace it self; for a man may make a God of grace, or of prayer, &c. a man I say must *deny* all these so farre as they are stumblings and offences in his way to hinder him from Christ.

But oh sayes one, my father will disinherite me, I must humour him, he cannot endure a Puritan; If I must live as you would have me, I shall never have foot of his land; so the servant saies, I have a prophane master and he will turne me out of doors if I be so precise; yea, but what sayes Christ? *if you will come after me*, you must deny *Father and Mother and all*; better it were that thy Father disinherite thee then that Christ should reject thee; therefore

therefore you must *deny all* and *take up his crosse* and make it thine owne.

And so I come to the words *Let him deny himselfe*; because *justification* is after *regeneration*, it is necessarie to shew what *selfe-seeking* is, before you understand what *selfe-deniall* is.

By *selfe-seeking*, I meane a man that hath a *head lust* whereby he is *selfe-conceited* of himselfe.

There are five things in *selfe-seeking*.

For first, *selfe* is a *head lust*.

Secondly, it's a *lust* of *self-conceit*.

Thirdly, of *self-will*.

Fourthly, of *self-wit*.

Fifthly, of *self-confidence*.

1. *Selfe* is a *head lust*, it is the main lust that keeps men from coming unto Christ; all seek their owne, not that which is Jesus Christs, *Philip. 2.21*. What is the reason? why because they seek *selfe*, they follow their owne thoughts; and because they are ruled by their owne selves, therefore they art not ruled by Christ.

*That it is a head lust*, I prove it by five argument.

1. Because it is the *leading lust* to all

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*lusts;*

*lusts*; no lust in the world but *selfe* leads the dance; why is man *proud*, but because *selfe* would get credit? why is a man *covetous*, but because *selfe* would have means and maintenance? why is a man *vengefull*, but because *selfe* will not put up wrongs? Christ bids us of all lusts to take heed of *selfe*, *Luke 21. 34.* Christ knowing what a deceitfull thing *selfe* is, he bids us have a care of self-beguiling; *Take heed to your selves* (saith he) for if you do nor, *selfe* will bring you into many noysome lusts, as *surfeting* and *drunkenesse*, and the *cares of this life*, &c. and so that day will come upon us unawares.

2. *Selfe* is the cause of all other lusts of the heart; it is the plotter and the ruler of all, it is the master of Arts; it was *selfe* that found out all lusts. *Selfe* found out pride, security and covetousnesse, and all other noysome lusts; *selfe* is loth to take the paines that God would have it, and therefore *selfe* sets his wits on the tainters, and hence it is that *Solomon* saith *God made man upright, but he* (viz. *selfe*) *hath found many inventions*, *Eccle. 7. 21.* Man was upright, and God was the cause; He became wicked, how? why *selfe* found out many

many inventions. *Selfe* is the inventor of all, and when *selfe* cannot get meanes enough by that way which God hath allowed, then *selfe* seekes out for credit, wealth, pleasure, &c. then it devises wayes of it selfe to get reputation, so that *selfe* is the cause of lust.

3. *Selfe is an inlust*, it runnes along through all the lusts of the flesh, there is in every lust of the flesh an ounce of *selfe*. There would be no security in man but that *selfe* would faine live at ease. So that as *David* said unto the woman of *Tekoa*, *hath not Joab a hand in all this?* so may I say, hath not *selfe* a hand in all this? *Aquinas* saith it is called *selfe* out of an inordinate love that a man bears to himself and to those things which seem good to a mans selfe: A man hath not onely lust to *pride*, *pleasure*, &c. but a man looks also to things for *selfe*, either for some profit for *selfe*, or credit for *selfe*; *selfe* is alwayes an inlust. See it in the wicked Steward, *Luke 16.* he said within himselfe, &c. hee was to be *turned out of his stewardship*. Now, what did he? he said to himselfe, or within himselfe; what said he? why, he said to begge he was ashamed, and dig hee could

could not; *selfe* was too lazie to work, and too proud to beg, and so he brought his masters two hundred pounds to fifty; and what was his reason for it? why, saith he, *that they may receive me into their houses,* verse 2. &c. and it is said, *the Lord commended the unjust Steward,* not as if he had commended the *sinne*, but as if he should say, I commend his *wit*.

4. *It is a make lust;* a man would never break out into lust if it were not for *selfe*. *Doeg* had a lust of confidence in his riches, *Psal.* 52. 7. and this made *Esau* comfort himselfe against *Jacob*; hee had a murdering lust to comfort himself, *Gen.* 27. 42. The Jewes had a lust of *formality* to pray, to hear, to bring offerings, to observe all the new Moones, and Ordinances of God, yet they had no delight in these things; no, their mind was on their imaginations, they loathed the word of God; why then would they do this? why *selfe* was the cause, and they thought thereby to stay themselves upon God, *Esay* 48. 2. And for this cause many amongst us come to Church; this is a damnable lust.

*Haman* would not have vaunted of being



ing invited to the *Queenes banquet*, but that the *Queene* invited none but *himselfe* with the *King*; he would not have beene so willing to answer to *Ahashueraths* question, but for *himselfe*; whom doth the *King* delight to *honour* more then *my selfe* thought he; *selfe* makes a man covetous, injurious, and full of wrongs, &c.

5. As it is a make lust, so it is a *requesting lust*; Other lusts are with some men out of date; many reprobates cannot abide drunkenesse, nor pride, nor usury; these finnes are out of date; why, doth not a man love a niggard? why, because *selfe* is not the better for him; he cannot get so much as a *dinner* by him; many other finnes may be out of date also with men: but *selfe* is never out of date, it is alwayes in *request*, and so long as men do well unto themselves they shall be praised, saith the Psalmist. *Psal.* 49. 18. he hath none to make much of himselfe but himselfe. *Every man for himselfe and God for us all*, saith *selfe*. But sometime *selfe* is out of love; but how? why hee will do no good but unto himselfe; this men cannot abide; this they say is *selfe* out of his wits; but *selfe* with the wis-

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dome

dome of the *flesh* is alwayes in request, *viz.* when men will be kind to others that they may be kind to them againe; this *selfe* the world loves alive,

2. Now I come to the second, which is *self-conceit*; *self-seeking* supposeth *selfe* conceitednesse. There is a bird called S. a faire bird, in French it is called the Devils bird, it is a black-bird, and yet it is conceited with it self that it is faire. By S. I meane first the *conceit a man hath of himselfe*. What shall I (saith *selfe*) be disgraced by one that goes to plough and to cart, and shall I put it up? No, I am a Gentleman, &c. Another saith I am such and such a Scholar, and shall I be contented with such a poor living? these men will beare no reproofe, *they will none of my counsell*, Prov. 1. 30. and *therefore they shall eate of the fruit of their own way*, &c. verse 31.

Secondly, when *a man is conceited of himselfe and of his owne gifts*, as commonly women are of their beauty, and scholars of their learning. A handsome man, and I warrant you he knowes it; diligent at Church, and he knowes it is so, &c. and he thinks his case the better; nay,

may, you shall have men so conceited of their parts, as that they will be conceited of their wicked parts, as *Simon Magus* was of his Sorcerie, *Acts* 8.9.

Thirdly, when a *man is self-conceited of his actions*; he doth as *Sisera's* mothers Ladies did when they had given their verdict of *Siseras* staying; they were presently conceited; oh what a wittie answer they made her; see *Judges* 5. 29. 30. as if they should say, we have answered very wisely; so a man cannot make a sermon, but presently hee is conceited oh what a learned Sermon it was; he cannot break a jest, but straight he is conceited, oh what a wittie one it was; nay of wicked actions; you shall hear many an old man tell what prettie pranks (as hee calls them) he played in his youth; and he tells it laughingly, which is a signe that he is self-conceited, or else surely he would speak it with shame and greife of heart.

Fourthly and lastly, *self-conceit is when a man is self-conceited of the estate he is in*. Many a man though he be the child of hell, yet he is conceited that hee is the child of God; who with the wretch in the Gospel have conceits that they love God and

Christ, and therefore with him they will come to the *Sacraments*; but Christ will say to such as he did to him, friends how came you in hither? can you conceit your selves to be freinds? get you gon into utter darknesse (*ie*) into hell, saith our Saviour.

Now if you would know what *self-conceit* is, you must remember that it contains *four things*.

First, where there is self-conceit, *there is no reall worth at all*; hee that is self-conceited is a base man; take that for a rule. A self-conceited fellow is a base fellow, as we use to say; there is no reall worth at all in a conceited man; all the worth that hee hath, is either *reall* as he thinks, or *conceitable*; now what *reall* worth can *self* have? You know what the Scripture saith, tis only in *imaginations*, and God scatters the proud in the *imaginations* of their hearts. *Luke 1. 43.* They it may be doe imagine that they are Gentlemen, or that they have faith, and yet God scatters these men in their *imaginations*.

Secondly, *as hee hath no reall worth in himself, so hee will not stand to the judgement of those that can judge him.* God can tell the

the worth of every thing, but they will not be judged by him; Gods Ministers out of Gods word can tell him that he hath no reason to think his case good; but he will not stand to the judgement of Gods Ministers. If a Minister should come to a man and say unto him, Sir, *you are conceited that you are a good Christian, I pray what signes have you for it; you pray, so doe Reprobates; you heare the word and receive the Sacraments, so doe Reprobates; hast thou no better signes then these? no better arguments then these? Why, I tell thee that a Reprobate hath these and more then these too.* A self-conceited man will be judged by none but by himself; A sluggard is wiser in his own conceit then seven men who can give a reason, *Prov. 26.16.* The sluggard is loth to take more paines; why, he thinks he takes paines enough, and so he is conceited, and more he will not doe; let *seven* men come and tell him that he must take more pains, yet he will not, and that because he is *conceited* that hee doth enough. Even so it is with the sluggish Christian, he is wise in his own conceit; for let *seven Ministers* come and tell him that hee must take *more* paines for heaven, or else he will never  
come



come there; yet he will not *believe* them; he is wiser then so, they are fooles as hee thinks, though hee have no reason so to thinke; he indeed is not as he should bee, and Gods Ministers can bring reasons out of the Scriptures to prove it; for Wisdom is profitable to direct, *Eccles. 10. 10.* But every conceited man is a blinde man.

Thirdly, *A self-conceited man as hee will not stand to the judgement of those that can judge him, so he hath too high a conceit of himself;* be he never so little godly, he is presently conceited he is a child of God; so if a man have never so little humility or patience, if hee come to Church, pray or doe but a few good duties in religion, hee thinks presently it is as a high wall unto him, and he shall goe to heaven cock sure; and let other men be never so holy, strict, religious, and pious in their waies, yet they are apt to think them Reprobates. If he see never so little slipps among them, hee is presently ready to say they are all naught; if any be false among them, hee is ready to say they are all hell-hounds; but if himself bee conceited that hee have never so little faith, oh presently hee thinks that is a high wall.

Fourthly,

Fourthly and lastly, *hee resteth in the judgement of himself*; and this is the case of thousands in the world; they think well of their own cases, when they die they shall goe to heaven, there is no question but Christ will save them, and from this conceit they will never be put; let all the Ministers in the world come one after another, and discover unto a wicked man his estate, yet hee will not come from his *own* censure; for though you bray a foole in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishnesse depart from him, *Prov. 27. 22.* So if you should bray these men with the threatnings of the law, with the plagues contained in the Bible, making their consciences black and blew (as we use to speak) yet they will not leave off their conceitednesse.

Now the reasons hereof are foure.

1. *Because all sinners are fooles*; and the foolish shall not stand in Gods sight, *Psal. 5. 5.* All that work iniquity are fooles; a self-conceited foole is a proverbe; and our Saviour who knew the combination of all finnes, joynes pride and foolishnesse together, *Mark 7. 22.* a proud conceited man and a foole are put together by our Saviour.

Saviour. And this is the cause why so many thousands in the world are conceited of themselves that their case is good when tis nothing so, even because they are fools; none but fools will look more after pelf, then jewels, and prefer *transitorie* things before *heavenly*; yet such are the wise men of this world. That man is a fool that cannot eate his meate; and such is every sinner; his soule hath no food but Christ, the word and his promises; yet he knows not how to feed on them; he hath no cover to hide his nakednesse but Christ, &c. yet he knowes not how to put on Christ; therefore he is a fool.

Secondly, *men are borne fooles*; of all fooles none so self-conceited as the *born* foole; one that hath been a *wise man*, knowes how to hold his peace, but a *born* foole is invincible; *vain man would be wise, though he be borne like a wild Asses colt, Job 11. 12.* Of all creatures the foal of the Ass is the simplest; needs then must the wild Asses colt be most simple. So although a man be borne a foole, yet he would be counted wise; he is *conceited* that all the Ministers in the world cannot direct him; no, he is wise enough for that  
matter

mater; this folly is bred and borne in him, he hath it by kind, and that is the reason that it is hardly clawed off, but they are ready to say they are as wise as the Ministers themselves.

I call not into question the wits of many; I know many of you are understanding men and women; but I speak now of the Wisdome of the *Spirit*, and how you may understand to *save* your souls. What is it for a man to be *worldly wise*, to get riches and honour, and to behave himselfe like a Gentleman, and yet a foole in seeking his salvation? this is to be *penny wise*; but here is the question, are you not *pound foolish*? can you go on in your sinnes, swearing, &c? then surely you are *pound foolish*; all your wisdome and money availes nothing; alas you are but penny Gentlemen. The Sodomites, *Gen. 19.* were blind, they could not find the doore; they could see well enough else, they were onely blind in this; so man is *stultus ad hoc*, wise enough for any thing in the world but this; take him for husbandrie, and his knowledge is good; for matter of carriage he can behave himselfe as well

as the wisest; he is only *stultus ad hoc*, for salvation he is a foole, a born foole, and self-conceited.

3. *Men are self-conceited of their owne estate*; those that praise themselves wee use to say have ill neighbours; so if a fool had a good neighbour to tell him of his folly, and to laugh at him for it, he would not praise himselfe; so he that praiseth himselfe, it is certaine he hath ill neighbours: so the reason why men are well conceited of themselves, is because they have ill neighbours; they think they are honest, and so do their neighbours; but now if a drunkard could go nowhere but that every one would tell him that he were a hellhound, he would not be drunk; but an ill neighbour he tels him he need not feare, by the grace of God he shall do well enough, he is a good Christian; and hence it is that when fooles are not answered according to their folly, that they are conceited of themselves; when men are soothed up, others thinke well of them, and they also think their owne cases good; for say they, if I were not a good Christian, such and such would not be acquainted with me.

Fourthly



Fourthly and lastly, *because the Lord delivers many up to the spirit of slumber,* Rom. 11. 8. Black poppy seed will cast a man into such a sleep as that his eyes shall be broad open, and yet he not see; so the Lord hath cast men into a slumber like a man betweene sleeping and waking; of all sleep none like to slumber, because it is full of imaginations; never is a man so full of dreams as then when he is in a slumber. If a man were a drunkard and in the deep of all evill, and luld in the deep sea of security, he could not be so well conceited; but now that his eyes are halfe open, halfe shut, halfe awake, halfe asleepe, halfe out, halfe in, he thinkes his repentance is good, his case good, and he hopes he shall find mercie at the hands of God, as well as the best Puritan in the parish; they are like the dreamer (as *Iosephs* brethren termed him) singular, in Hebrew *the Master Dreamer*; they dreame they shall have mercie, and they shall not be damned, these men are in a slumber, *they have eyes and see not, &c. Esay. 28.* they see the judgement of God, but *perceive* it not.

Con-

Consider what a wofull case these men are in, and how the Scripture calls this *self-conceit*.

First, it calls it nothing but a *thinking*; if a man think himselfe to be *something*, he is *nothing*. *Gal. 6. 3.* to think thy self a Christian, is a vain thought.

2. The Scripture calls it *superstition*; what a vaine thing it is for a man to be a supposing? they suppose they shall goe to heaven, they suppose they are better then others, better then those on whom the Tower of *Siloam* fell; and so many suppose they are not in the gall of bitterness nor in the band of iniquity.

Thirdly, it calls them *shaddowes*; they walk in a vain shew *Psal. 39. 6. viz.* their repentance shewes as if it were good repentance. They can speak lowly, there is a shew that they are humble. Man walks in a *vain* shew, like a Tradesman who hath abundance of things which he makes shew of, yet are none of his own; so hee talkes of *grace* which was never his own.

Fourthly, it calls them *imaginations*, *Acts 4.*

Fifthly, it calls them *appearances*, *Matth. 6. 16.* So men appeare all at a Sermon, but their

their hearts never lie down before the Word; there are nothing but seemings, 1 Cor. 3. Thus you may think your selves or suppose your selves to be in good case, when as it were better thou didst appeare to be a hell-hound then a Christian, and not be so indeed; for then there were some hope that thou wouldst look out. If a man be sick, yet if he seem to be well, none will look out for him as they would doe if he seemed to be sick indeed; and therefore this is the most dangerous sicknesse; so if men did seem to be damned wretches, that they were borne and continue in sin, and when they dye they must be damned, if men feared thus, they would look out.

Secondly, *consider so long as thou art well conceited of thy self, Christ hath no commission to call thee;* and Christ will doe nothing but what he hath *commission* to doe, he will not runne into a *Præmunire*; Christ doth protest to all the world that hee hath no *commission* from his Father for such; *I am not come to call the righteous, &c. Matth. 9. 3.* viz. those that are *righteous* in their owne esteeme and thoughts, but are not; if a man tell them that they are fitter for hell then for heaven, they are

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Mat. 9. 13

better-conceited of themselves then so ; if a man tell them for all their profession they may be hell-hounds, yet they conceit better of their profession then so; now then consider what a case thou art in, if thou bee out of Christs road.

Thirdly, *as Christ hath no commission, so he is glad he hath not*, and he gives thanks to his Father that he put him not into commission, I thank thee O Father, &c. *Luke 10. 21. q. d.* thou dost not convert those that are *self-conceited*, those that think they shall not be damned, such as conceit that they need no summons, that are righteous enough; Father, I am glad of it, &c. and it is said there that Jesus rejoyced, &c. I rather rejoyce that thou hast sent me to poor soules, such as are the off-scouring of the world, &c. but he that is *selfe-conceited*, is wiser iorsooth then so; Christ tels thee that thou must *take up* his crosse; but thou thinkest that thou hast more wit, thou canst goe a wiser way to worke; thou hast an easier way to heaven, thou wilt none of the Crosse; and I tell thee then that Christ will none of thee, but he will be glad to see thee damned.

Fourthly

Fourthly and lastly, *he is in the broad way to hell that is selfe-conceited*; there be many wayes to hell; the covetous goes one way, the Drunkard goes another, there are a thousand wayes to hell; though there be sundry wayes to hell, yet they all meet in *selfe-conceit*, there is the broad high way where all meet; *selfe-conceit* is not only the way to hell, but it is the *broad way* where all wayes meet. *There is a way* (saith the wise man) *that seems right, &c. Prov. 14. 12 but the end of it is death*; there is the wages, there all the wayes meet. Oh then examine your selves. I should give you *signes and tokens* to make it appeare unto you; but the time will not give me leave. I will only name one or two. That man that selfe-sweares, is conceited of himselfe, that is one signe; As I am an honest man, As God shall help me, by my faith and troth, As I looke that the Lord should save my soule, &c. these men are highly conceited of themselves, they think that their salvation is sure, yea so sure that that they may sweare by it, but these are devillish and damnable selfe-conceits;



it is Gods prerogative only *tr* *swear* by  
*himself*, Heb. 6. 13, 14. I speak this be-  
cause I know it is a common practise a-  
mong men, and a hellish brand of a cursed  
self-conceited man.

T H E

THE  
EFFICACIE

Of Importunate

P R A Y E R

In two

SERMONS.

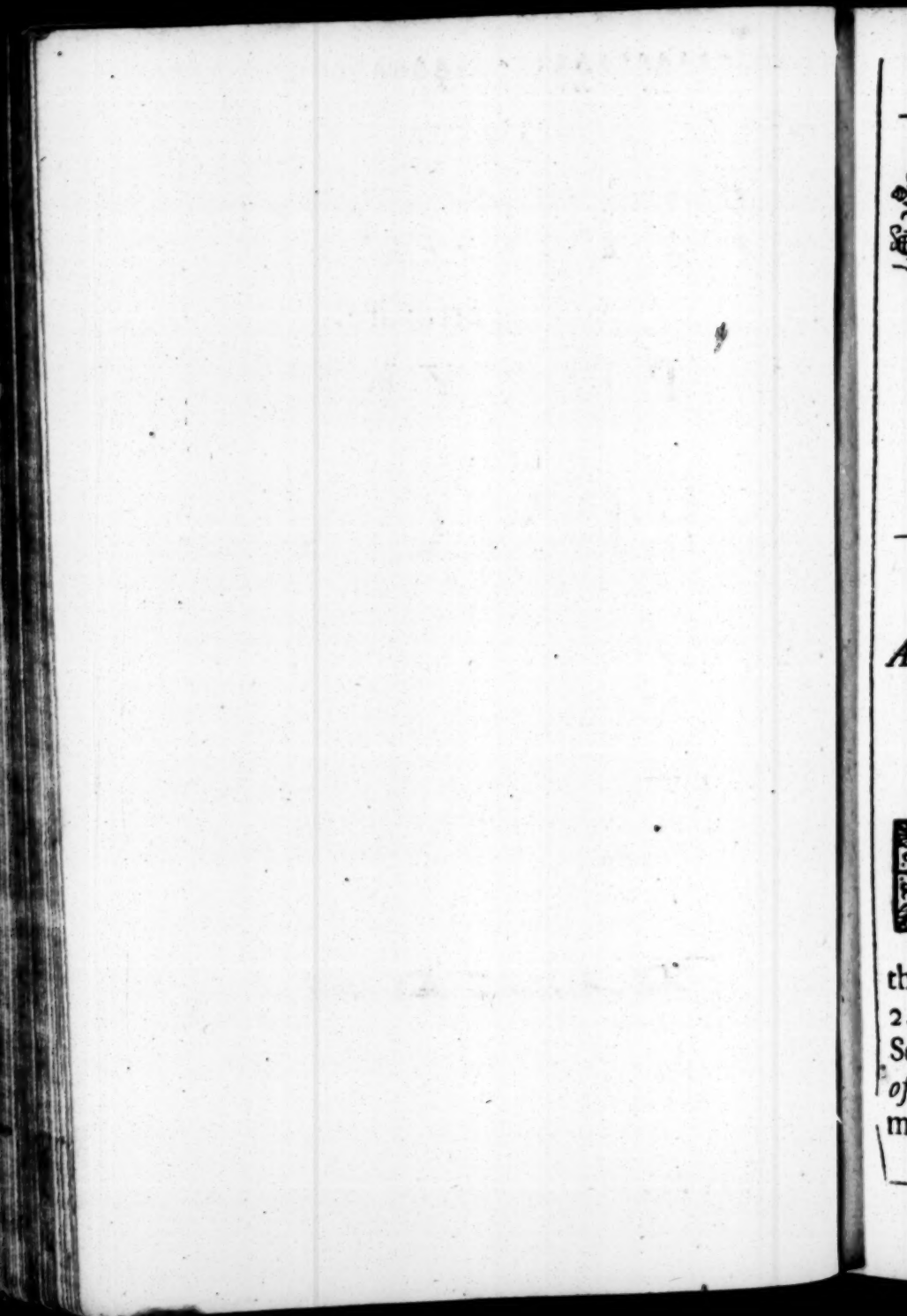
B Y

That laborious and faithfull  
Messenger of CHRIST,

WILLIAM FENNER, Some-  
times Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in  
*Cambridge*, and late Minister  
of *Kochford* in *Essex*.



Printed at *London* by *T. R.* and *E. M.* for *John*  
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THE EFFICACIE  
OF  
Importunate Prayer.

LUKE II. 9.

*Ask, and it shall be given unto you ;  
Seek, and you shall find ; Knock,  
and it shall be opened unto you.*



Ur Saviour CHRIST being demanded by one of his Disciples, *how they should pray* ; He here teaches them these two things. First, a *Platform of prayer*, in the 2. 3. 4. verses ; Say, *Our father, &c.* Secondly, he teaches them the *Importunity of Prayer*, which he sets forth by the similitude of a man who having a guest

come to him at midnight, and had nothing to set before him, he went to his friend to intreat him to lend him three loaves, and at the first he nakedly intreats, Lend me three loaves: The door is shut, sayes his friend, and I cannot open it now. Secondly, he falls to intreat and to beseech him to do him this favour, He had a guest come to him, and he knew not what to do: Why, 'tis *midnight*, sayes he, is there no other time to come but now? Thirdly, he begins to *knock*, he must needs have them, though it be at an unreasonable hour. Why, I tell you I am in bed. Then he intreats him as a friend. Friend me no friends, sayes he again. Yet the man would not leave knocking: at last with much ado the man rises, saying, Will you never be answered? and he lends him three loaves, because of his *importunity*. Now, saith our Saviour, *I say unto you, though he would not give him as a friend, yet because of his importunity he will.*

The similitude is this: Thou art *that man*, oh Christian soul, this guest is thy self: Now then come home to *thy self*, with the *Prodigall*, who when he was come to himself, goes to his *father and friend*.

This



This friend is Christ, that thou art to pray unto; these three loaves are *grace, mercy, and peace*: These thou art to pray for; it may be Christ answereth thee in thy *conscience*, It is *midnight*, thou comdest too late, there is no *mercy* for thee. The soul *prayer still*, Oh Lord awaken and help me: it may be the Lord will answer thee by *terror* in thy soul, The door of mercy is shut, thou shouldest have come rather. Yet Lord, open unto me, sayes the soul: Nay, saith the Lord, all my children have mercy already; now mercy is asleep, I have converted them already; they came in due season, thou comdest at *midnight*, there is no mercy for such a hell-hound as thou art. Up Lord, have mercy on me, sayes the poor soule, and look on me, &c. Look me no looks, saith the Lord; I came to save the *lost sheep* of the *house of Israel*: there was a time when I would have converted *thee*, when I called unto *thee* early and late: But now I am asleep, and my mercy is asleep, it hath been awake as long as it could well hold open its eyes; and comdest thou *now*? Oh the soul cries still, and will never give over: if mercy be to be had at the throne of grace, he will have it.

it. Even as a begger being at a gentlemans door, they bidding him be gone, there is nothing to be had: nay, sayes the begger, I will not be gone, here is something to be had, and I will have something, or else I will die at the door: The gentleman hearing him say so, thinks it would be a shame for if him if he should *die* at his door, and gives him somewhat: So when the soul is thus *importunate*, because of importunity it shall be granted. Verily I say unto you, if you *thus* aske, it shall be given unto you.

These words contain in them the *main* duty of *importunate* prayer. *Ask*; if asking will not serve turn, *seek*; if seeking will not serve turn, then *knock*: try all meanes.

Another parable our Saviour put forth, *Luke 18. 1, 2. that men ought alwayes to pray, and not to faint.* There was a poor woman wronged by her adversary, and there was no Judge to right her but a wicked one, so that she had but poor hopes; yet she resolves to go, or else she shall be undone; therefore if she perish, she will perish at his feet. He calls her all to nought. Oh, for Gods sake help me, sayes she. I

care

care not for God nor man, says the Judge: Nay, good my Lord, saith the woman. The Judge seeing her thus importunate, said, I shall be troubled with her if I do her not justice. *How much more* (saith the text) *shall not God avenge his elect that cry day and night?*

*Obj.* But some man may demand, what is *importunate prayer*?

*Ans.* I answer, it is a *restlesse* prayer, which will take no nay, nor contumelious repulse, but is in a holy manner *impudent* untill it speed; and there are in it foure things:

First, it is *restlesse*: he that is importunate, cannot rest till he speed in his suit before God: as the poor woman of *Canaan*, she sought the Lord God of heaven and earth, (she was of the cursed stock of *Cham* whom the Lord commanded to destroy; yet she repented, and became of the faith of *Abraham*) to see if the Lord would own her: but the Lord seemed to reject her, and suffer'd the devil to possesse her daughter. Now, what, might not this poor woman think she had made a sorry change of religion, seeing that God the author of it would not own her, but suffered the devil

devil to possesse her daughter. But see the *importunity* of this woman, she would not be quiet untill she had found Christ, *Mark* 7. 24, 25. Christ could not be hid. No? What, could he not hide himself in some corner? No, no, thinks she, there is a Christ, and if he be to be had under the cope of heaven, I will have him. Even so it is with the soul that is *importunate* in prayer, it is restless. What if Christ do hide himself in the Word, &c. and will not owne a poor soule; yet the poor soule knowes there is a Christ, and if he be to be found in the whole world, he will have him: I will, saith he, turn over all duties, I will go to all the Ministers that are neer, I will use *all the means*. Now Christ cannot be hid from such a soule that is thus importunate.

Now as it is a Prayer that will take no *nay*, so first it will take no *privative nay* of silence; Secondly, no *positive nay* of denial.

First, no positive nay of silence: A man that is importunate in prayer, must and will have some answer; he is not like *Baals* Priests, that could get no answer, 1 *King*. 18. 26. nor like wicked men that pray in their pewes, they know not what,  
nor

nor whether God hears them or no: but an importunate prayer will have an *answer*, like the woman of Canaan: *Have mercy on me O Lord* (said she); but *Christ answered not a word*. Hath she done then? No, she cries so much the more, *Have mercy on me O Lord*: yea she was so importunate, that his Disciples were ashamed to heare her; yet she cryed, *Have mercy on my daughter*; the devil hath my daughter, and misery will have me, unless thou wilt have mercy on us. Christ answered her never a word. It was much trouble to her to have her daughter vext with a devil; but this troubled her much more, that Christ in whom all her hope was, would not hear her, nor lend her one look. What? might she think, Is this the mercifull Saviour, that is so full of pittie and compassion? Is this he that hath made proclamation to all the world, saying, *Come unto me all ye that are weary, &c?* and I am tyred and wearied by reason of the devil that posselles my daughter &c. yet he regards me not. Thus she might have said: yet these discouragements could not put her off, but *she cried so much the more*, yea so that the Apostles were ashamed that Christ should let her stand  
on



on that fashion ; yet she stood it out, and prevailed.

Secondly, it will take no denial : For when she had an denial, and that flat against her, it was like bellowes to the fire, she was so much the more inflamed, she doubles her forces; *Have mercy on me ô Lord, &c.* Christ put her off with a denial, *I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;* I come for sheep, not for goats ; you are of the *Canaanites*, on whom I have set a brand of damnation, *a servant of servants*, a slave of hell and darkness : These are all of your blood ; but I come to save them of the house of *Israel*. But the denial of an *importunate* soul is like the stop in a passage of water ; the more it is stoppt, the more violent it is : so this poor woman is so much the more eager with Christ ; she did but *crie* before, now she *worships* him, *vers. 24. 25.* as if she should have said, Lord help me now, I am one of thy *lost sheep* ; I confesse I am a *Canaanite*, I am of that damned blood ; yet Lord help me ; I am perswaded that thou canst take a course whereby to help me, Thou canst cast some mercy on a *Canaanite*.

Thus

Thus you see, an *importunate* soul will take no denial, but will renew its forces at the Throne of grace.

Thirdly, an *importunate* prayer will take no contumelious repulse; suppose God should answer never a syllable of thy prayer, yet thou wilt pray; suppose he doe answer, and that against thee, yet still thou wilt pray. Nay suppose he call thee all to nought making thy conscience tell thee of all thy sins and abominations, making thee think that heaven is shut up against thee, and God hath shut his eares, calling thee Dog, hell-hound, and wretch, &c. yet nothing can breake thee off if thou be *importunate* indeed. So this woman was not beaten off with Christ sending the Devill into her Daughter, nor with Christ hiding himselfe when she sought him; nor with Christs answering never a word, nor with the Apostles frumps, nor with his denyall, nor contumelious repulse, for he called her *dog*, vers. 26. Hence dog, I had as lieve fling my mercy on a dog, as on thee. What creature but an *importunate* one, could have gone so far? But see here the nature of *importunity*,  
it

it gets within Christ and takes advantage: she confest the cause, saying, *Truth Lord*, thou hast hit me right, I am a dog, or a wicked woman; let me then have the priviledges that dogs have; though dogs may not be equal with children at the table, yet they may wait under the table: I acknowledge that thy children are so plentifully fed, that some *crummes* fall from the table, therefore let me have the *priviledge* of a dog. *Naaman* the Syrian was a dog, as well as *I*; *Rahab* the harlot was a dog, as well as *I*; *Ruth* a dog, as well as *I*; yet these got crummes: truth Lord, I am a dog, yet thy mercy can metamorphise a dog: Of these *stones* thou canst raise *children* to *Abraham*. Thus it is with an importunate soul; though God call it all to naught, and cast all ignominious terms upon it, as, I had as lief thou shouldest offer me swines blood, as to speak in my hearing; yet if thou be *importunate*, thou wilt beare any contumelious repulse.

Fourthly, *an importunate prayer is in an holy manner*: And as an impudent begger that is needy, counts it no manners to hold his peace from begging, although he be bidden; Or as a poor petitioner to the

King

King, the King bids him hold his peace, yet he will not, but still he goes on: The officers say, Thou filthy fellow, wilt thou never have done? dost thou not see that the King is angry? Yet he still cries, Help me Lord, O King. So the Canaanitish woman, or an impertunate prayer, is an *impudent* prayer, yet in a *bold* manner.

I remember a story of a poor woman in *Essex* condemned to die: she falls to crying and screeching, as if she meant to pierce the heavens; the Judge and those on the bench bid her hold her peace: O my Lord, said she, it is for my *life* I beg, I beseech you, it is for my *life*. So when a soul comes before God, and begs for mercy, he must consider that it is for his life, O Lord it is for my life. Now though the Lord will not answer, and though he call the soul all to nought, letting it go up and down with a heavy heart; yet the soul crying out, 'Tis for my life; if I must go to hell, I will go to hell from the throne of grace, weeping and wailing for my sinnes, and catching hold on the horns of the altar: this soul shall find mercy.

I have wondered at the story in the 5. chapter of *Luke*, it is a strange passage,  
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where

where this godly kind of impudencie was seen. Our Saviour Christ was preaching in the house to the people, and there was a poor man that could not tell how to come to Christ; so the poor man got some to lift him up to the top of the house, and to untile it, and so to let him down; now the rubbish could not choose but fall either on Christs head, or on the heads of some of his hearers; Was not this an impudent action? could not this man have stayed untill the sermon had been ended? But *importunity* hath no manners: And although he did interrupt Christ, yet Christ asked him not why he did so, but sayes, *Man, be of good comfort, thy sins be forgiven thee.* Let us therefore come with boldnesse unto the Throne of grace, *Heb. 4. 16.* with freedom to talk any thing; Not as if God had given us leave to be irreverent, but as to a loving generous man, of whom we use to say, He is so kinde, you may say any thing unto him; come to him at dinner, he will rise up and hear you, or what businesse soever he be about, yet he will hear you. Even so it is with God: he is such a God that all poor souls may be bold before him to speak what they will, they may



may lay open their cases, and shew their estates. Now when soules come boldly, and give the Lord no rest till he establish them, *Eesai. 62. 7.* then saith God, How now, cannot I be at rest for you? &c. This *holy* kind of impudencie is in prayer, and it will give the Lord no rest.

Reasons *why wee must seek importunately*, are three.

First, *in regard of Gods majesty*, he loves to be sought unto, and it is fit he should be sought unto. Among men, we account it a matter of too much state-*linesse* to be *much intreated*; and we use to say *he loves to bee intreated*; this is a fault among men; yet for all this, *Quis vestrum*, &c. as *Seneca* speaks, what man of us can be content to be but once, or slightly entreated? when a man comes to intreat a kindnesse of a man there is *Ising and Anding* and *shall I*, &c. nothing but *importunitie* can get a kindnesse of a man; and this is a sinne among men, because men are bound to doe good; but the Lord is not bound to us. If we sinne, he is not bound to pardon us therefore; the Lord being a God of majesty, looks

to be sought *unto* of us for his mercie, and he lookes that we should be importunate; and hence it is that God saith *I will give you a new heart*, Ezechiel 36. *I will vouchsafe you all these favours, yet I will look to be inquired for of you.* verse 76. *I will look that they shall send to me for these things.*

Suppose a man should need a 1000 pound; What, saith the gentleman, doth he think a Thousand pound is nothing? *I will have good security for it.* So when we come for such high mercies as these, for such infinite compassions; these are somewhat, and God looks to be sought *unto* for them; and Christ the son of God is a great heire, and those that are faulters to him, must be *importunate* with him, if they mean to be at peace with him.

If one will marry a rich heir, who hath all the preferment & dignity that the country can afford, he looks to be well sued unto. So the Lord Jesus is a great heire, heire of the whole world; if thou goest to be married unto him, thou must sue unto him, and he looks for *prayer*, he loves to heare his children crie: this is one of his titles, though he be a God, yet he is *the bearer of prayer*, Psal. 65. 2.

Again,

Again, we have wronged his Majestie. Suppose thy servant wrong thee, thou wilt say thou wilt pardon him, but first thou wilt make him humble himself unto thee, he shall & must know that he hath wronged a good master: So God is willing to pardon thee, but yet he will make thy bowels know that thou hast sinned against a good God; he will make it appeare by thy prayer, he will make thy spirit melt, he will fill thy face with shame and confusion, he will make thee know what a patient God thou hast rebelled against, or else the Lord will never pardon thee. Doeſt thou think to pacifie God with a *laxie* prayer, with comming to Church and saying, Have mercy upon me, most merciful Father? Doeſt thou think that the Lord will have mercy upon thee for this? No, no, he may send thee quick to hell for all this; he will make thee cry and cry again with groans; he will make thee cry out and pray on another gates fashion, and he will make the soveraignty of his mercy to be seen in thy salvation: therefore in regard of Gods majesty, he loves men should be importunate.

Secondly, in regard of Gods *mercy*; it is a disgrace for Mercy to be begged *frigidly*; 'tis a disgrace to Gods bounty, for a man to beg it with *lukewarm* importunity. What makest thou of the mercy of God? dost thou think that it is not worth a *groan*, with the running over of a *Pater-noster*? dost thou make Gods mercy of such base reckoning? this is a disgrace to Gods goodnesse, to be so cold or frigid in prayer. Thou hast offered many offerings, yet I scorn them, saith God, *Esa. 43. 23.* Thou hast not honoured me with them, thou hast not called on me, thou hast been weary of calling on me, thou hast too short a breath in thy prayers, thou carest not how soon thou comest to an end? Do you come and lay *lazier* prayers upon my altar? Thou hast not honoured me.

It was a custome among the Romans, when any was condemned to die, if he looked for mercy, he was to bring father and mother, and all his kinsmen and acquaintance, and they should all come with reares in their faces, and with tattered garments, and kneel down and beg before the Judge, and cry mightily; and then they thought Justice was honoured. Thus they

*honoured*

*honoured* justice in man, for a man condemned to die; and so the Lord loves his mercy should be *honoured*, &c. and therefore he will have prayer to be *importunate*, that it may appear by *groans* how *highly* we esteem of grace; our-soules must pant and gasp after grace, the breath of the Lord being the soul of our souls, our hearts will die without it: This is to the *honour* of mercy, therefore the Lord will have us *importunate*.

Thirdly, *as importunity must be in regard of Gods mercy, so it must be in regard of our selves*, else we cannot tell how to esteem it: Soon come, soon gone; lightly gotten, suddenly forgotten; I have it, come let us be jovial and spend it, when this is gone, I know where to have more. But if he had wrought for it, and also must work for more, if he meant to have more, he would better esteem it. The world little esteems Mercy; what's the reason? The greatest covetous men are they that once were poor; when a poor man hath gotten store of riches, he is more covetous then he that was borne to hundreds or thousands; they are carelesse of it, and spend lavishly, whilst a covetous mans



teeth water at it; and the reason is, because they come lightly by it. Therefore the Lord loves that we should come *hardly* by our mercy; not as if he *sold* mercy for our *pains*, but for our good: yet we are not capable of it. See Jer. 31. 9. where the Lord speaks thus to his people: *They shall come with weeping, and with supplication will I lead them.* This is a fine phrase, God *leads* a soul up and down with supplication, before he grants his request; just as a begger on the high-way, a gentleman comming by, he begs of him, the gentleman goes on his way as if he took no notice, but the begger goes on crying, For Gods sake (sir) bestow something on me; yet he goes on still, till at last the gentleman comes to his house, and then he gives him his desire. Even so God *leads* a soul up and down from one good duty to another, till he have brought the soul to that passe that he would have it to be, and then he hears it, and sayes, What is thy suit? I will pardon thee.

What then is the reason, may some man say, why so few are *importunate* in prayer?

I answer, first, because *men count Prayer a penance*: there is a naturall kind of Popery

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pery in mens breasts; the Papists, when men sin, their Priests enjoin them penance, as pilgrimages and scourgings, so many *Pater-noster's*, and so many *Ave-Marie's*, where they reckon Prayer to be a penance. This naturall Popery is in mens breasts; they count Prayer laborious unto them, and they are weary of it, they are not eager upon prayer, they look not on Prayer as a blessing, but as a *yoak*; behold what a wearisome thing it is, *Mal. i. 13.* They were *weary* of the service of God; Oh, say they, that the Minister would once have done! they had rather be in an Ale-house, or about their busines; all good duties are as *penance* unto carnal men. If a man be to *dopenance*, he cares not how litle he does of it; a Rogue cares not for too much whipping.

Secondly, *Men content themselves with formality.* Many men pray, as *Haman* spake the Kings words before *Mordecai*, for he had rather have led him to the gallows, than to have said, *Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the King will honour:* but he thought it would be the worse for him if he spake them not, and therefore he only spake them for *forme*. And so men  
for

for the most part go to church, to hear the Word, to Pray, to receive the Sacraments &c. even for *forme*, or because it is the fashion, and they think if they do not thus and thus, they shall not be saved.

You shall have the Drunkard say, I am sorry for my drunkenesse; but he lies; for the next day he will be at the Alehouse again: so the Whoremaster sayes, Lord I am sorry that I have sinned against thee; but he lies; for the next Quean that he meets with, having opportunity, he falls to whoreing again: So the Covetous man will say, I am sorry I am so full of earthly thoughts; yet he lies; he is not sorry; for you shall have him carking and caring all the day long, and he hath a thousand proclamations in his head; He only prays for *form* with the rest, they only *say* prayer, they *pray* not. I deny not *saying* of prayer, if they *pray*; Our Saviour Christ saith, When you pray, say *Our father*. The proud man dishonours Gods name, saying, *Thy will be done*; whereas he should be *humble*, for that is Gods will; it is Gods will he should be *zealous*, yet he prays not: He sayes, *Forgive us our trespases*, &c. but he prays not so; for he wrongs his neigh-

neighbour, and his neighbour wrongs him, and he does not forgive those that trespass against him. He sayes, *Lead us not into temptation*; but he prayes it not; for he runs presently into *temptations*, and hath no care to avoyd them. And this is the reason why men are not *importunate*, viz. because they do make *formality* of it.

Thirdly, *because they are Gentlemen-beggars*. Of all the beggers in the world, I would be loth to meet with a *gentleman-begger*, for he is the proudest of them all; if a man tell him that he hath been an *ill husband*, and hath abused himself, presently he sets his hands to his side, saying, I am not as every begger, I am *thus and thus* descended, I am as good a man by birth as your self: a gentleman-beggars heart will not stoop. So men are *gentlemen-beggars* to God, they were (say they) borne of Christian parents, and they have been baptized the children of God already; What, are none the children of God, but a company of Puritans? We are descended as well as the best of you all. These are proud and not as yet brought to a *sense* of their own misery.

When

When *John* did preach to, and baptize the Scribes and Pharisees, he calls them all to nought, O ye *vipers* and full of poison, *who hath forewarned you to flee from the anger to come?* Viper, say they? Viper in thy teeth; we are the children of *Abraham*, we are better descended then so; we are Believers, and do you call us *Vipers*? then indeed we might crie out, Oh we are damned! then we had need to crie for mercie. And in this sense, men are *Gentlemen-beggars*.

Another reason why men are not importunate, is, because *they have wrong conceits of Prayer*. I will tell you the sundry conceits of men,

First, *they have high conceits of their own prayers*; they cannot pray in a morning, between the pillow and the blankers, half asleep and half awake, but they think that they have done God good service; so that he cannot afford to damne them: At night he saies, *Lord have mercie on me*, and so goes to sleep, and then he thinks God must keep him untill the morning: So when he goes to dinner, he saies, *Lord blesse these creatures unto us*, and so falls aboard, and he thinks that God must needs sanctifie



sanctifie them unto him; and after supper he goes to prayer, and so to bed, and thinks that he shall be heard for his much babling sake, *Mat. 6.* they think God will have mercy on them. But poor soules, if they knew how *unseemingly* they prayed, how *unfitly*, and what want there is in *seeing* their own estate, they would say, is this to pray for my soul, for such infinite mercie? Lord, how do I abuse the throne of grace? how do I abuse thy sabbaths, thy house, thy name, and all the holy ordinances which I go about? A man that is *importunate* in prayer, is ashamed; but when they think *highly* of their prayers, they are insolent, their prayers are damned, and they too.

Secondly, *as men have high conceits of their prayers, so they have mean conceits of their sinnes*, they think not their sinnes so bad as they are. These men are like *Abner*, who said, *Let the young men arise and play before us*, 2 Sam. 2. 14. They account murder a sport, and dancing and musicking little worse then *Dauids* playing on the harp; *Amos 6. 5.* And if they commit adulterie, they say that's but a trick of youth; if they tell a lie, it is only at a dead  
lift

lift when they have no other shifr. That man that doth not think of every sinne he commits, as *David* did of his, even to make his heart to ake for it, that man shall never speed well before God.

Thirdly, *as men have mean thoughts of their sinnes, so they have base thoughts of God.* They cannot think that God should damne a man for *drinking a pot with his friend*; I cannot think God will be so strict; No, no, I love God with all my heart, say they; and they think that God is of their mind; and if they were as God, they would not be so strict. So, *Psal. 50.* *They thought I was such a one as themselves;* they think God will pardon them, and therefore because of this, men are not *importunate* with God. God hath sent me a crosse (saith one) but I hope to rub it off well enough. Why? *God will not keep his anger for ever, Jer. 3. 5.* Suppose a man be absent from Church, or break out into some unfavoury speech, will God be angry for this? Suppose a man be negligent in a good duty, will God require every dayes work? Tush, tush, God will not, *Psal. 10. 13.* A company of Puritans say he will, but I know he will not: and hence

it is, that men will not be *importunate*.

Lastly, because *they have wrong conceits of importunity*. If a man knock once or twice, or thrice, and none answer, presently he will be gone; this is for want of manners; thou wilt knock seven times, if thou be *importunate* with them: They within may say, Hold thy peace, be gone, &c. but thou wilt not so be answered.

Beloved, men are close-handed, they are loth to give; and they are close-hearted too, they are loth to take the pains to *ask* of God; they are loth others should be *importunate* with them, and therefore they are loth to be *importunate* with God. Examine your selves then in this duty; for *importunate prayer is evermore the prayer of an importunate man*.

T H E

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# THE EFFICACIE

Of Importunate  
P R A Y E R

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The second Sermon.

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B Y

That laborious and faithfull  
Messenger of CHRIST,

WILLIAM FENNER, Some-  
times Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in  
*Cambridge*, and late Minister  
of *Rochford* in *Essex*.

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THE EFFICACIE  
OF  
Importunate Prayer.

LUKE II. 9.

*Ask, and it shall be given unto you;  
Seek, and you shall find; Knock,  
and it shall be opened unto you.*



O proceed then: There be six  
signes to know whether our  
Prayers be *importunate*, or  
no.

First, *importunate prayer is evermore  
the prayer of an importunate man*; and the  
man is importunate, if his praier be im-  
portunate: But how can a *man* importune  
God for mercy, when his *person* impor-

taines God for vengeance? It must be the prayer of a *godly* heart; *Preserue my soule, for I am holy.* Psal. 86. 1, 2. David makes a prayer, and he was *holy* when he made it; his prayer could tell him that he was one that labored to work in holines. Therefore when thou goest to God in praier, consider whether thou canst say, *Lord hear me, for I am holy*, and I would fain be *holy*: but if the saying of these words choak thee, then thy prayer *condemns* thee.

Of all begging, it is a great matter *who it is* that begs at the door: *Who is that*, saith the indweller? and when he opens the door and sees it is a *thief*, &c. Oh, *is it you*, saies he; you may stand long enough, you shall never have alms of me. So in praier, it is all in all *who it is* that prayes.

The woman in the Gospel having an issue, touched our Saviour; he looking about, asked *who touched him*; and when he saw the woman, Oh is it you, saies he, be of good chear, Luk. 8. 48. So when a man prayes to God; *Who is that*, saies God, that would have these mercies? And when the Lord sees it a Drunkard, or a covetous man, &c. *is it you?* saies the Lord; you may stay till Dooms-day, and yet never find

find mercie. The spirit of supplication and the spirit of prayer, is called the spirit of grace, *Zach. 12. 10.* If then thou hast not the spirit of *grace*, thou canst not *pray*. The text saith not, Whosoever asketh the Father in my name, but, whatsoever *you* ask the Father in my name? there is many a man may use the name of Christ at the throne of grace, but certain it is none but those that are in Christ can pray, and with them every thing operates. A man that will walk with God in obedience to his laws, must be a holy man: hence is that saying of our Saviour, *John 15. 7.* a place fit for the purpose; *If you abide in me, and my word abide in you, &c.* as if he should have said, You may ask what you please, & intreat God all the daies of your life; yet unlesse *you abide in me*, you cannot speed. That man that walks not in *holinesse* of life, can never be an *importunate* orator as was *Moses* the man of God, but a wicked mans prayer (as *Augustine* speaks) is *tanquam latratus canum*, &c. no betrer then the barking of dogs, or the grunting of swine: therefore you whose *consciencess* tell you that you live in sin, your praies never speed at the throne of *grace* for *eternal* mercie.

Secondly, *an importunate praier is the praier of a pure conscience.* Suppose a man doth not see that he lives in sin, yet if his conscience crie guilty, if he have a foul conscience, his praier never prevails with God. *If I regard wickednesse in my heart, the Lord will not hear my praier, saith David, Psal. 66. 18.* that is, if I can say, or my conscience can tell me that I *regard iniquitie* in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. A man must have a *pure conscience*, 2 Tim. 1. 3. else let him not look God in the face; beg he may, but he shall never *speed* as long as he goes on with a conscience that can tel him he *regards iniquitie*.

There be many *pray*, (for indeed their conscience will make them *pray*) but they may *pray* till they come to hell, yet they shall never be delivered, if there be but *one sin* unrepented of.

I remember a storie of a poor woman being troubled in conscience, and many Ministers using to visit her, at last came one which (after much talk and praying) hit upon one sin which she was guilty of, and loth to part with; Then the woman cried out, Till now you have spoken to the past, but *now* you have hit the mark, my  
conscience



conscience tels me I have been loth to part with *this* sin, but I must leave it, or else I cannot be saved.

*Mala conscientia bene sperare non potest.*  
The Pagans had so much divinitie, as to say  
*The gods must be honoured with puritie;*  
therefore they wrote on the doors of their temples, *Let none having a guilty conscience enter this place,*

Thirdly, *Importunate prayer is evermore a prayer that is full of strong arguments.*  
And hence it is that Job saith, *I will fill my mouth with arguments,* Job 23. 4. like an importunate man, who will bring *all* reasons and arguments to effect his cause; even so an importunate man at the throne of grace, will bring *all* arguments to perswade God. If a man be to pray for any particular grace, he will bring *all* the arguments he can devise to get it; as, Lord, it is a grace of the Covenant, for the want whereof I endure many temptations; thou hast made me a Minister, I cannot work on mens consciences untill I have it; he presseth all arguments he can devise. A good orator before God, must be a good logician. It was noted of the High-Priests that were to pray before God, they were

to have *Urim* and *Thummim*, and that was two parts of Logick, *viz.* knowledge and perfection: such a one should a Minister be, he must be a good Logitian at the throne of grace.

Fourthly, *importunate prayer is a stout prayer*; Continue in praier, saith the Apostle, *Col. 4. 2.* a *weak-hearted* praier is a *cold* praier, a praier without a spirit; yet these men that have weak spirits to pray, have strong enough to sin, and wit enough to sin, and knowledge enough to sin; but bring them to grace, then they have no *strength*. Thou canst not strive to prevail with God, unlesse thou *stand* to it. How came *Jacob* to prevail with God, but by *wrestling*? Prayer is called *fighting*, it is a holy kind of *violence*. Thou canst not obtain a mercie at Gods hand, unlesse thou lay all thy force on it. Even as a Father who hath an apple in his hand, and his child would fain have it; he first opens one finger, then another, till the apple drop out. So is it with a poor soul at the throne of grace: the Lord opens his hands, and fills all things living with plenteousnesse; What is the meanes that is used? why, the praiers of his children; they by their  
praiers

praiers open Gods hand, and so make the blessings to descend. Go for grace; why, the Lord will say unto thee, Thou art proud, thou must be humble, *and so open that finger*; Thou art carelesse, thou must go quicken thy self, *and so open that finger*: God saies, thou wilt not make much of *this* grace when thou hast it, but thou wilt turn it into wantronnesse; then thy soul must learn to *mortifie* its members, *and so open that finger*; thou canst not get grace at Gods hand, unlesse thou do *open all his fingers*, and then it will fall down. There is a severall power in all Gods children, some have more, some have lesse, yet all must be *powerful*; else none can *prevaile with God*.

Fifthly, *if thou pray importunately, thou praieest wakefully*; he must be deeply awake that *praies*; his soul, his heart, his understanding must be awake: that man that praies drowsilie, praies not powerfullie; *Watch* therefore, saith Christ, and *pray*, Luk: 21. 36. Watch to pray. *q. d.* for as there is a sleepe head, so there is a sleepe heart. As a Begger who is begging, is all awake, head, feet, hands, &c. all is awake to beg; so must that soul be that means to speed in praier.

Sixth-

Sixthly, *importunate praier is an assurance-getting praier*; a praier that will not be quiet till it have got assurance that God hath heard it. Wicked men *pray*, and presume that God hears them, but God hears them not; nay, many of Gods dear children *pray* many times, and are not heard. *How long wilt thou be angry with thy people that praie thee?* Ps. 80. 4. Not only with their *persons*, but with their *praiers* also. How then, think you, is the praier of such as live in their sins taken? who *pray*, but their praiers vanish away in the aire like clouds: these may *pray* and *pray*, but they get nothing.

*Behold he praies*, saith the voice to *Saul* Act. 9. 22. What, did he not *pray* before? Yes, he had made many a long praier, else he could not have been a Pharisee; but now he did not onlie *pray*, but he praied unto God as *David* did, who did *lift up his heart to God*, Psal. 25. 1. or else his heart could not have praied; and then in the next verse *David* begins his praier. Our hearts are just like a bell, which so long as it lies on the ground will make no musick, till it be lifted up; Our hearts are not like the bell of *Rochea*, which (*they say*) will  
ring

ring of its own accord ; but our hearts must be lifted up, else they will make no delightful musick in the eares of God. Wherefore if you *pray*, and labour not to bring your hearts home to God, that so he may hear them in mercie, he will (*it may be*) heare them, but it will be to your *condemnation*, as he hears the praiers of wicked men : therefore if thou praieſt, pray ferventlie.

There be six or seven marks of Praier that is not importunate, and he that praies so, may go to hell, for ought I know.

The first is a *lazier* praier ; An importunate man works hard to bring up his suit ; his understanding, his counsel, and all his policie works : so if the soul be *importunate*, then it is a *working* praier. Praier is a labour, 2 Cor. 1. *Labour with me in praier*. That man that plowes his field, and digs his vineyard, *that man* praies for a good harvest ; if a man *pray* to God never so much, yet if he do not use the *meanes*, he cannot obtain the thing he praies for. Even so it is with grace ; A man may *pray* for all the graces of Gods spirit, and yet never get any, unlesse he labour for them in the use of the means. God cannot abide lazie beggers,



beggers, that cannot abide to follow their calling, but if they can get any thing by begging, they will never set themselves to work. So, many there be, that if they can get *pardon* of sin for *begging*, then they will have it; but let such know that the Lord will not give it for such *lazier* kind of praying; but if thou wilt have *pardon* of sin, thou must labour for it, thou must get it with thy fingers ends; God gives not men Repentance, Faith, &c. by *miracles*, but by *means*: Thou must then use the *means*, and keep watch and ward over thine own soul, that so thou maiest get the grace thou praieſt for.

Secondly, *a praier that is not a full praier never speeds with God*; but an importunate praier is a *full praier*, it is a *pouring out* of the heart, yea of the *whole heart*, *Pſal. 62. 8.* the Psalmist ſaith, *poure out your hearts before him*, trust in him at all times, *poure out your hearts* (the addition is made in the Lamentations of Jeremie) *like water*. It may be thou poureſt out thy *praier* like tar out of a tar-box, half ſticking by the ſides; but when thou praieſt, thou muſt out with *all* before God. When thou givest thanks, doſt thou labour to remember all

all the blessings of God? when thou dost petition to God, dost thou poure out *all* thy heart before him? dost thou cast all thy care on God?

Thirdly, *Snatch-prayer is no importunate prayer*; when men pray by snatches, or peecemeals, by breaking off a limme of their praier, because of sluggishnesse, or because their hearts are eager about other businesse; it is not good to trust *fits* of devotion; 'tis a base kind of *praying*, when men *gallop* over their praiers, that so they may come to an end *quickly*. Should I accept this at your hands, saith God by his Prophet? when they brought a sheep, it wanted a lim, they were loth to give God a whole offering, *Mal. 1. 13*. Many pray a peece of a praier in the morning, and then they go after the world; he down's on his knees, and gives God a rag of a praier, a companie of ragged ends; And God counts it an indignitie; *shall I accept this* (saith he)? What, a lame praier? No, no, the Lord looks for a *prayer* that hath its full growth; it is a shame to speak in the congregation what men do in *secret* before God, which many have confessed after they have been converted,

how

how they have gone into *Gods presence*, and have shuffled over their praier, thinking every houre seven, untill they had done.

Fourthly, *Silent praier* are never importunate. I mean by *silent* praier, when a man is *silent* in that which God looks he should most insist upon. David made a praier, *Psal.* 32. and the Lord looked that he should stand much upon his *adulterie* and *murder* which he had committed, to see what shame he took on him for it; but he shuffled it over: and what saith the text? *When I kept silence*; what, did the Prophet *roare*, and yet *keep silence*? these are contradictions. Yea, the Prophet *roared*, and *kept silence*; as if he should say, the Lord counted his praier but *roaring*, so long as he laid not open *that sinne* which the Lord lookt he should have stood on; the Lord let him *roare*, and *roare* he might long enough; but (saith he) *I brake my silence*, I said I will confesse my transgressions, and then thou forgavest the wickednes of my sin. So many go to God, and tell God they must needs have mercie, and fain they would have mercie, and yet they are *silent* in *confessing* the *sinne* they should.

I say, the Lord will never hear that man; he may pray to God all his life, and yet go to hell in the end. Hast thou been a drunkard, and dost thou think that the Lord will forgive thee for crying, *Lord forgive me &c?* No, no, thou must *insist* on it, and say, *Against thy word I have been a drunkard; my conscience told me so, but I would not heare; I have felt the motions of thy holy spirit stirring against me, and I regarded not; Now if thou shouldest turn me into hell, I were well requited; so many Sermons have I neglected; I have wronged others in this kind, and I have been the cause why many are now in hell, if they repented not. I have praied for mercie, yet with the dog to his vomit have I returned; and therefore for all my praiers thou maiest cast me into hell for ever; and now I haue praid, yet it is a hundred to one but I shall run into my old sin again; yet as I expect forgivenessse, so I desire to make a covenant to give over all my sinful courses, and I am justly damned if I go to them again.* Such a kind of praier the Lord loves.

Fifthly, *Seldome praier is no importunate praier*; when the soul contents it self with seldome comming before the throne of grace; an importunate soul is ever frequenting

quenting the way of mercie, and the gate of Christ; he is often at the threshold before God, in all praier and humiliation.

The reeling'st Drunkard in the world sometimes can do so too; the basest Adulterer in the world sometimes can be chaste: the Devil is quiet so long as he is pleased, and the wicked may sometime have a fit in praier. But this is the condition of an importunate heart, he is frequent at the throne of grace. The Prophet David praied *seven times in a day*; and *Hannah continued in praier night and day*.

Sixthly, *Luke-warm praier is not an importunate praier*; when a man praies, but is not *feruent*, when a man labours not to winde up his soul to God in praier. That man that praies *outwardly* only, that man teaches God how to denie his praier. Though you make many praiers, saith God, yet I will not hear you; *why? Your hands are full of blood. Qui frigide orat, docet negare.* They are like luke-warme water, that never boils out the blood: So they have been guiltie of murder and abundance of other sinnes, and they did indeed pray against them, but they were never but luke-warme, they never boiled away the blood.



blood of their sins. Thou must pray *fer-*  
*vently*, with a seething-hot heart, if thou  
meanest to get *pardon* for all thy sinnes, as  
securitie, and deadnesse of heart, &c. And  
as it is *Jonah* 3. let every man crie *mightily*  
unto the Lord.

Seventhly and lastly, *Bie-thoughts in*  
*praier*, keep praier from being importunate;  
as when a man praies, and lets his heart go  
a wooll-gathering. I remember a storie of  
an unworthy Oratour, who being to make  
an acclamation, *O earth! O heaven!* when  
he said *O heaven*, he looked *down* to the  
earth; and when he said *O earth*, he looked  
*up* to heaven. So, many when they pray to  
God in heaven, their thoughts are on the  
earth: these praiers can never be impor-  
tunate. When a man praies, the Lord looks  
that his heart should be *fixed* on his praier;  
for our hearts will *leake*, and the best child  
of God, do what he can, shall have bie-  
thoughts in praier:

And that,

First, from *corrupt nature*.

Secondly, from *nature curbed*.

Thirdly, from *Sathan*.

Fourthly, from a *mans own sluggishnesse*.

H

For

For the first ; The best children of God have *corrupt natures*, and when they have done what they can, distractions will fasten on them. They would performe good duties better, if they were able, saying with Paul, *The good which I would, I do not*, &c.

Secondly, *from Nature as it is curbed*; The more grace binds nature to its good behaviour, the more rustling it keeps. Even as a Bird being at *libertie* keeps no stir, but being in a *cage*, it flutters about, because it is abridged of its libertie : so when thou hast curbed thy corrupt flesh, it will be skittish in every good dutie thou goest about ; and hence it is that the Apostle useth this phrase, viz. *I find another law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind*, &c. When grace curbs the law of sinne, then nature rebels.

Thirdly, *from Satan* ; as in *Job*, Satan stands at his right hand as a *Plaintiffe*, as *Agidius* compares it, which puts in all Cases to hinder the *Defendant* ; Even so the Devil puts in all bie-thoughts that he can devise, to hinder a mans suit for going on before the throne of grace. But thou must do as *Abraham* did, when he was sacrificing ;

crificing; when the birds came, he drave them away; so must thou do by thy bie-thoughts, if thou wilt have fruit of thy supplications before God.

Fourthly, they come from *spiritual sluggishnesse* that creeps on the best, if they take not heed: And this was the reason the Apostle cryed, *O wretched man that I am, &c.*

I speak not now to the children of God, who are troubled w<sup>th</sup> bie-thoughts in their praier; For they, the more bie-thoughts they have, the more earnest they are in praier; they *mourn*, with *David*, in their praier. Consider ô Lord (saith he) how I *mourn*, Psal. 55. There was something in the Peophets praier that did *vex* him, and that made him so much the more to mouru before God.

But as for you that can have bie-thoughts in praier, and let them abide with you, your praier is not importunate; the Heathen shall rise up against you and condemn you.

I remember a storie of a certain Youth, who being in the temple with *Alexander* when he was to offer incense to his god, and the Youth holding the golden Censer

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I remember a storie of a certain Youth, who being in the temple with *Alexander* when he was to offer incense to his god, and the Youth holding the golden Censer

with the fire in it, a coal fell on the Youths hand and burnt his wrist; but the Youth considering what a sacred thing he was about, for all he felt his wrist to be burnt, yet he would not stir, but continued still to the end.

This I speak to shame those that can let any thing, though never so small, to disturb them, yea (if it were possible) lesser things then nothing; for if nothing come to *draw* their hearts away, they *themselves* will employ their hearts. *Bawls* Priests shall condemn these, who did cut themselves with knives, and all to make them *pray* so much the more stronglie. What a shame is it then, that we should come on *life and death* to pray for our souls, and yet come with such loose and lazie praiers! Think you that a malefactor when he is crying at the Bar for his life, will be thinking on his Pots and Whores, &c? Was it ever heard of, that a man at *death*-doore, should be thinking on his Dogs? can he then think on them? Do you think that *Jonah* prayed on this fashion, when he was in the Whales belly? or the Thief on the crosse, or *Daniel* in the Lions den, or the three Children in the fierie furnace, or

*Paul*

*Paul* in prison? Do ye think that these prayed thus? What, shall I be at prayer, and my minde in the fields? No, no; if I will *pray*, I must *melt* before God, and bewail my sins, and be heartilie affected in *prayer*. But as long as I pray thus, I pray not at all. And as God said to Adam, *where art thou?* so may he say to thee, *Man, where art thou?* art thou at *prayer*, and thy mind at *mill*? is thy mind on thy Oxen, and art thou at prayer before me? what an indignity is this? Should a man come to sue to the King, and not minde his suit? will not the King say, Do you mock me? know you to whom you speak? The Lord takes this as a hainous sin, when men come into his presence with such loose hearts.

Now seeing these things are thus, take a word of exhortation to labour for importunate Prayer.

*Prayer is the art of all arts*; it enables a man to all other duties, it is the art of Repentance, &c. *Samuel* confessed, if he had not had the *art* of Prayer, he could not have had the art of Preaching, 2 *Sam.* 12. 23. See the antithesis between these two words. *God forbid*; as if he should say, God forbid that I should cease to pray for

you, for then I should not teach you the right way. A Minister can never preach to his people; that *prayer* not for his people. It is the *art* of Thanksgiving; a man cannot be thankfull, if he cannot *pray*. *Psal. 116. 12.* It was the meanes whereby the Prophet *David* would be thankfull to God; he would *take up the cup of salvation*, and *call on the name of the Lord*. A man hath not a good servant, unlesse he can *pray* for his master; see the storie of *Abrahams* servant, *Gen. 24.* Prayer helps to perform all other good duties. How dost thou thinke to have benefit by the *Word*, unlesse thou be fervent in *prayer* with God to get a blessing upon it. We can do nothing but by begging.

Secondly, as Prayer is the *art of all arts*, so it is the *Compendium of all divinitie*. Therefore to *call zealouslie* on the name of the Lord, is to be a Christian; *Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord, &c.* It includes repentance, humiliation, sorrow for sin, joy in Gods goodnes, thanksgiving for mercies, obedience to his commandements, yea the whole dutie of man; therefore we must labour to be importunate in prayer. A *Reasonable* soul is *eminently*

all



all souls ; so Prayer is *eminently* all good duties. *Psal. 72. The prayer of David the son of Jesse* ; that is, all his repentance, in all passages ; he did humble himself before God ; all  *Davids* duties are included by the name of the *prayer* of David the son of Jesse. And therefore thou hadst need to make much of Prayer ; for thou canst never *repent*, unlesse thou *pray* well.

Thirdly, *Prayer is a mans utmost reverence* ; a man cannot have Christ, but only by Prayer. 'Tis bad enough for a man to be a Drunkard, or to live in any other sin ; but yet after all this, if a man have the *spirit* of *prayer*, there is hope of this man ; if after all his sinnes committed, he can *pray* to God, there is hope. But for a man to sinne, and not to be *importunate* in *prayer*, is dangerous. What saith the Psalmist ? They are corrupt and become abominable, they have not called on the name of the Lord, *Psalms 14. 4.* Oh fearfull condition !

Fourthly, *Prayer is that which Gods people have, though they have nothing else* ; it is the beggars dish ( as I may so call it.) A begger hath no way to live, but by begging ; therefore he had need beg hard :

So we have nothing to *live* on but *praying*; I mean nothing that is to be done on our side; all the *promises* of God are to be gotten by *prayer*. Suppose a man have nothing to live on but his fingers ends, no house nor land, nothing left to maintain his wife and children, but his fingers ends; will he not be toying all the day? he is a day-labourer, as we use to say. So, to *pray* earnestly, is a Christians fingers ends. When a house stands but upon *one* pillar, will not a man be fearfull and carefull of that pillar? why, Prayer is a mans pillar; if this be gone, down falls all the hope of salvation.

Fifthly, *Prayer is that which hath the command of Mercie*; we are such unprofitable servants, that Mercie will not meddle with us, unlesse it be commanded. Patience is loth to beare; we have so provoked God that Mercie is loth to make or meddle with us; for unlesse it have *command* from God, it will not admit of any soul. When *David* begged for loving kindnesse, he was *importunate*; else mercie and loving kindnesse would not look on *David*, Psal. 42.8.

Sixthly, *Prayer is Gods delight*. The supplication of the wicked is abomination to God,

God, but the prayer of the upright is his delight, *Prov.* 15. 8. The Lord must have something to please; Kings (you know) must be pleased; so the King of heaven would be *pleased* by all that come unto him. Now nothing is more pleasing unto him then prayer.

Seventhly, *Importunate prayer is a willing prayer.* There be many that pray to God for mercie, and yet they are loth to have it; why? because they are not *importunate*. When a mans lust runs on the world and worldly pleasures, &c. he *speeds* not. When the woman of *Canaan* was *importunate*, Christ saith unto her, *Woman, be it unto thee as thou wilt*: she had a will to grace, *Mat.* 15. 28.

Eightly, *Importunate prayer is the only faithfull prayer.* A begger never goes away from a gentlemans door, so long as he believes he shall have an alms: so, as long as a soul is *importunate* with God, it is a signe that it is a *believing* soul. O woman, (saith Christ) *great is thy faith.* Why? Because her *importunitie* was great, therefore Christ concludes her faith was great.

The means to get *importunitie* in prayer, are these:

First,

First, *Labour to know thine own misery.* See *Ephes. 6. 18, 19, 20.* They could not have prayed importunately, unlesse they had known how it had stood with *Paul*; so unlesse thou *know* thy miserie, thou canst not be *importunate*. If a Drunkard, or Whoremaster, or Sabbath-breaker, or Swearer, &c. *knew* that they should be *damm'd*, they would get out of their sins.

Secondly, *You must be sensible of your miserie.* *Simon Magus* knew his miserie, yet because he was not *sensible* of it, he sayes, *Pray ye to the Lord for me, Act. 8. 24.* If he had been *sensible*, he would *himself* have fallen down before the congregation, and he would have confessed how he had committed that sinne, in a more apprehensive manner.

Thirdly, *Observe the prayers of Gods people,* as here the disciples of Christ did; they hearing Christ pray, say unto him, *Master, teach us to pray*; they were so affected with Christs prayer, that they said, Oh that we could pray thus! Oh that we had such a spirit! *Master, teach us to pray.* So I say, consider Gods people, how they pray; they can pray as if they would *sware* up to God in supplication; they pray as if  
they

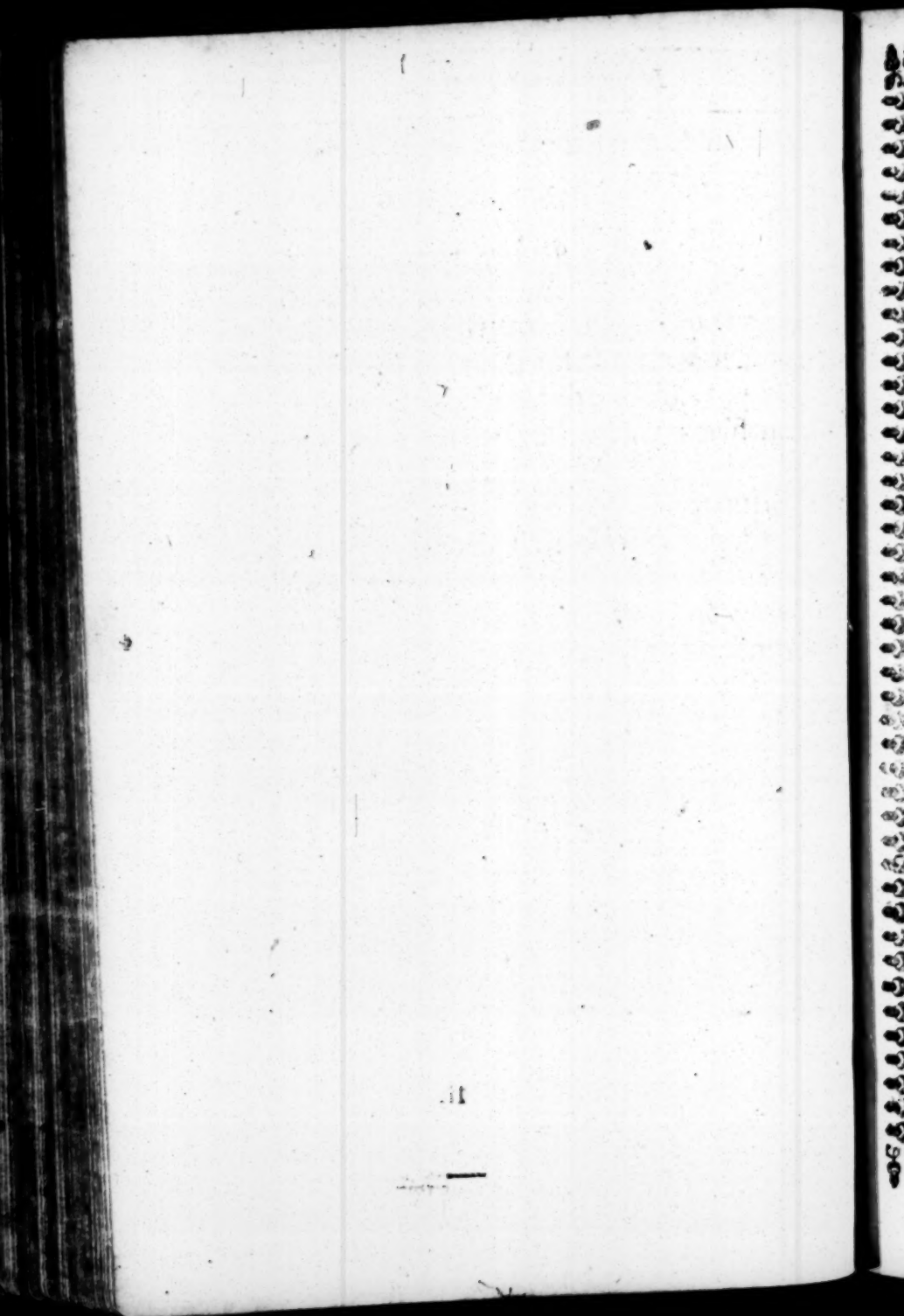
they would *rend* the heavens. If men did but *consider* this, it would quicken them.

Fourthly, *Get a stock of prayer.* That man must needs be rich, that hath a stock in *every market*. So if a man have a stock of prayer, it is a signe he is like to speed, as 1 Cor. 4. 2. If God did lend his ears to the Corinthians when they were crying for Paul, then certainly Pauls prayers were importunate.

Fifthly, *If thou wilt be importunate, labour to be full of good works.* *Qui bene operatur, bene orat*; as *Act. 10.* Cornelius his alms and prayers were come up to God: now if he had committed drunkenness, *that* had come up to God with his prayer; therefore was it happy for *Cornelius* that he was full of *good works*; so thou canst not be importunate, unlesse thou be full of good works; take heed that swearing, and lying, &c. crie not *louder* in Gods eares then thy prayers.

Sixthly, *If thou wilt be importunate in prayer, labour to reform thy household.* VVhen *Jacob* was to call on God, he said to his household, Put away your strange gods, *Gen. 35.*





THE  
NECESSITIE  
OF  
GOSPEL  
OBEDIENCE.

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In two Sermons.

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BY

That laborious and faithfull  
Messenger of CHRIST,

WILLIAM FENNER, Some-  
times Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in  
*Cambridge*, and late Minister  
of *Rochford* in *Essex*.

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THE NECESSITIE  
OF  
Gospel-Obedience.

COLOSS. I. 10.

*That you might walk worthy of the  
Lord unto all pleasing, being fruit-  
full unto every good work.*



Here is a *double* sense in these  
words:

First, wherein we may not,  
nor cannot walk *worthy* of  
G O D.

And secondly, there is a sense, wherein  
we may, and must walk worthy of  
Him.

The

The first sense, wherein we cannot walk worthy of God, is twofold.

First, *We cannot walk worthy of God, with an absolute worth of exact proportion;* for in this sense the Angels of heaven cannot walk worthy of God: they blesse God and praise him uncessantly; but God is above all blessing and praise, *Nehem. 9. 5.* Their holinesse &c. had a beginning; but God is *infinite*. Oh then, how much lesse can we walk worthy of God!

Secondly, *We cannot walk worthy of God, with a finlesse worth of a mortified condignitie,* so worthily as we might have done if we had not had sinne; for we are compassed with the flesh and sinne, which leads us on to all impieties. And in this respect *John* saith, *I am not worthy,* &c. *Luk. 3. 16.* It was no idle complement in that good man, That he was not worthy to untie Christs shoo-tyers, or to carry his books after him, as we use to speak; but it is certain, in regard of sinne which makes us unfit to do any dutie to God; God is worthy of *better* service then the best of us can performe, and to have better attendance then we can give him.

Nevertheless, there is a sense wherein

we



we *may* and *must* walk worthy of God.  
And this is also twofold :

First, *quoad dignitatem non repugnantie*,  
As a niggard or a sparing servant is an *un-  
worthy* servant to a bountiful master, or a  
drunkard to a servant of God: there is a  
repugnancie between a master and such a  
servant. He that will not take up his crosse  
and follow me, is unworthy of me, *Mat.*  
*10. 37.* And in this sense we must walk  
worthy of God, that is, not contrary to  
God.

Secondly, This *worthy* includes *digni-  
tatem condecencie*; Walk *worthy* of God,  
*i. e.* suitable unto him. A correspondencie  
there must be between Christ and those  
that are his, between the children of God,  
and God; we must walk answerable to  
him; God is holy, gracious, mercifull, &c.  
now we must walk *worthy*, (*viz.*) suitable  
to those attributes; and not to deal basely  
with God, who hath dealt bountifully  
with us, and hath delivered us from hell,  
and helps us to heaven. Let us not then  
put unworthy tricks on God, but let us  
walk as men renewed. So much for the  
sense.

I

This

This speech is directed to the professors of the gospel of Christ in *Colosse*; for first, *Epaphras* had given out that there were godly soules in that city.

Secondly, as it was reported; so this report came to *Paul*; he heard that there were a company of men, that went for Gods saints: *We have heard*, saith he, &c. *vers. 4.* I *Paul* heard so; and hence it is that *Paul* directs his speech. As if he should say, (for so it is in the ninth verse) I hear that there are professors among you; Now I pray God that you walk *worthy* of God; You professe Christ and his word, I pray God you may walk worthy of the master you serve. Hence observe,

*Doctr.*

*That those that professe Christ, must walk worthy of Christ; worthy of Christ whom you say you serve, or they serve.*

This is further commanded, and that expressly, in *1 Theff. 2. 12.* That you would walk worthy of God. Think not that this is a duty left to your choise; no, no, saith the Apostle, you know how we have exhorted & charged you; as if he should say, I have given many exhortations to this purpose, I have begged that you would do so, *ver. 11.* I have encouraged and com-  
 forced

forted them that have done so; I commanded the unwilling, and you know it, and I tell you that this is a duty of great consequence.

First, *because he hath called you to be Christians*; now it is a shame for you to be unworthy of your calling whereunto you are called. It is fit, if a man be called unto a calling, that he be worthy of it. When a wicked and an unjust man is preferred to be a Judge, God knowes he is a very unworthy man for that calling: A licentious Divinie for a pulpit, is unworthy of that vocation. It is a shame a man should be unworthy the calling whereunto he is called. We are called to be Christians; is it not a shame a man should be unworthy the vocation the Lord hath called him unto? I beseech you, saith the Apostle, *Ephes. 4. 1.* You are called to be Christians by Christ: I beseech you consider this, and be worthy of this calling. Art thou a Christian, and art thou not loving and kinde? Are you Christians, and yet are you carelesse and secure, and will you not walk as Christ walked? What, shall a man be a Christian, and carry himself dishonestly, otherwise then the Gospel commands?

*Reas.*

mands ? What a shame is this ?

A second ground or reason is ; *The Gospel of God whereby we are called, this is a blessed calling.* The Lord Jesus tels thee what gospel is, *Luke 4. 18.* it is riches to the poor, sight to the blind, deliverance to captives, a gospel of peace and libertie &c. It hath many excellent names in Scripture. Now this is the gospel whereby you are called from being damned wretches, to be the sons of God. That man is unworthy of freedome, that is content to be a slave; he is unworthy of these blessed things which the gospel brings, that will walk in sinne still. What, will you be captives to hell still ? will you go on in your *old* fashion still ? will you live after the imaginations of your *own* hearts still, notwithstanding you are called by the gospel ? Have you the gospel of a Kingdome, and will you not obey it, when it calls you to be Kings ? what an unworthy thing is this, that a man should not behave himself *worthy* of the gospel whereby he is called ? *Phil. 1. 27.* This is a main one, that your conversions be *worthy* of the *gospel* of God. For men to be covetous, proud, drunkards &c. still, when we have the gospel to draw

draw us out of these sinnes; surely it is a shame, and we are unworthy of this gospel.

Thirdly, because *we are called to Repentance*. For as we are called by the gospel, so by the gospel we are called to *repentance*; therefore we must walk worthy. Is it repentance enough, to *heare* a Sermon, or do any good duty? No, no, these are not fruits *worthy* the name of repentance, *Luk. 3. 8.* I mean not worthy to be repented of, but, not worthy the name of repentance. For a man to put finger in the eie, and crie, *Lord*; is this worthy the name of *repentance*? No, no, it is othergates mourning then this. True it is, many repent, but they repent not *enough*; they must bring forth fruits *worthy* repentance.

Fourthly, because *if we walk not worthy of God, the wisdom of God will not hold us for his servants*. A master, if he be wise, will not keep a servant that will not do his businesse; if the master have cattell to be looked unto, and other businesse abroad to be done, if his servant do lie and sleep all day, or lie at the alehouse and neglect his masters businesse, sure I am, if he be but worldly-wise, he will not keep



such a servant. In 1 Sam. 30, 31. an Amalekite did turn away his servant because he was sick; this was hard dealing; Nevertheless, that man that will not walk *worthy*, that will not look to the *charge* that God hath given him, he is unworthy to be Gods servant. The Lord hath abundance of businesse to be done; Commandments to be perform'd, Sacraments to be received, & abundance of imployment; & shal he hire servants & do his work himself? will any keep a dog, & bark himself? That man is not worthy of God, that will not do his busines: therefore the wisdom of God will turn us out of doors, because we leave his work, and fall to wrangling within our selves. What division is there amongst us? what heart-burning between neighbours and neighbours? what growing cold in religion, &c? And God hath haste of busines to be dispatched; why are not his Commandements regarded, his Promises desired, his Judgements feared? Certainly, the Lord expects that we should goe about these things, and wee are unworthy, if wee doe them not.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, *If we will not walk worthy of God, then 'tis for his glory to cashier us out of his sanctuarie.* It is not for a masters credit to keep a servant that will discredit him; as to keep a whoremaster, or a sharking companion; what will honest men think? Is not he naught himself, that keeps such shag-rags about him? All the dishonour lies on the master. So it is not for the honour of God, to suffer such to be within the company of professors of his Name, that dishonour his Name, and cause the gospel of God to be blasphemed by them that are without. So soon as *Elishai* his servant had abused him, he sent him packing, *He went forth from his presence, &c. 2 King. 5. 27.* He should stay no longer with him; why? because he had dishonoured him; and what might *Naaman* think? Will he now have something? and even now he would have nothing; he hath soon repented him of his kindnes. Though *Naaman* did not argue thus, yet thus he might, and, for ought we know, such thoughts he had; but howsoever, *Gebazi* greatly dishonoured his master, and therefore his master sent him out of his presence. Even so, if we walk not

worthy of God, he will turn us out of doors.

*Note.*

You that be the servants of God, and be taken with a Lie, undermining one another, or that live uncharitably one with another; this is a dishonour to God, this is not to walk worthy of God: no, It is to disgrace the Gospel, and to cast aspersions on it. Therefore as it concerns the glory of God, so we ought to walk worthy of God. What may the world think, if Professors walk loosely, and be taken tripping? what will the world say? *God keep me from being a Puritan; I had rather be a Papist:* and thus the name of Christ comes to be blasphemed for your sakes. These say, Come, come, I warrant you for all this, yet he will *lie* for a need, though he say *Yes verily*. And thus Religion and the gospel of Christ is called into question by the men of this world, even for your sakes that walk not worthy of God; nay, by reason of this, God cannot hire servants to do his work. Beloved, God hath sent us out to hire servants; now many would come in willingly, but because they see & think that those that professe the name of Christ be dissemblers, Puritans, and hypocrites;

crites ; and therefore they say as sometimes the *Indians* did of the *Spaniards*, If these men be the servants of Christ, I will never be his servant ; So, if these men be the servants of God, Lord blesse me from them. What a damned thing is this?

Sixthly, *If we walk not worthy of God, we put great indignity upon him.* A worthy man cannot abide to meddle with unworthy things ; and shall a Christian serve God after an unworthy fashion ? No master, either in heaven, earth or hell, will have a servant unworthy of him ; and this is the reason why men sweare, and lie, and live like devils incarnate, because the Devil will have them worthy of hell. So the world lets men cozen and dissemble, for no other cause but because the world will have them worthy of the world. So that all masters, whether the world, the flesh, or the devil, look that their servants should be worthy of them ; and do you then think that the Lord will not have his servants walk worthy of him ? *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, Gal. 6. 7.* Dost thou come into his house, heare his Word, and wilt thou not obey it ? Comest thou

*Note.*

to

to a Sacrament, and hast thou drinking, carding and dicing, at home? Thou goest under the name of a good Christian, yet thou livest in thy sins, having a *secret* lust, either to sweare, or lie, or to commit adulterie. Take heed, I say, God will not be mocked. For men to go in the name of Gods children, and yet not to serve & obey him, this is to make a mockery of God; but God will not be mocked.

Oh, saith one, my Father will never like it, if I be so strict and precise; and as for my Mother, she cannot abide a Puritan. Another saith, I cannot keep my children unlesse I put my money to use, &c. But what saith Christ? *He that loveth father or mother, &c. more then me, is not worthy of me, Mat. 10.37.* Dost thou argue on this fashion, and yet hopest to be a Christian? Dost thou plead *self-respect*, and dost thou hope to go for a Christian? what a mockerie is this? nature abhors it.

I remember a storie of a Boy, who being at *Lyons*, and saw two men, one tall, and he had a short cloak, the other short, and he had a long cloak; and thought it very unseemly; so he took the long cloak and put it on the tall mans back, and the

short



cloak on the short mans back, and then it liked him. So, is it seemly that any of us should weare the long robes of Christianitie, and yet be short in Obedience? that we should go for the people of God, and not behave our selves suitably?

In this place there is no room for Papists to establish merit for themselves; the Apostle intends no such matter in this place; for we are not our own men, and therefore cannot merit. We are taught to pray, *Give us this day our daily bread*; we have not one bit of bread but we must beg it; and when we have done all we can, (as who doth?) yet we are but unprofitable servants. But suppose we could merit all righteousness; yet all our ability is from God. Again, suppose we be righteous, what is that to him? if we be holy, what is that to him? If we be damned, he is never the worse; if we be saved, he is not the better; if we keep all his commandments, yet it is his mercy to save us. He shews mercy to thousands; to whom? not to them that sin, but to them that love me and keep my commandments, *Exod. 20.6*. To one that keeps Gods commandments, it is his love to save him, it is his love

love that he hath mercy on him. The Church of *Rome* do talk much of their well-doing; but in the mean while what becomes of their sins? they should go and suffer for their sins, and then come and talk of merit. Do they talk of merit before they have satisfied for their sinnes? the Law will be satisfied first; and when they have endured hell-fire world without end, then let them talk of merit. The Lord doth not mean that we must walk worthy so as to *merit* any thing: for suppose that all the sufferings of this life, and all the torments of the world that all the Saints of God have suffered, were put on one man, and he to endure them all; yet they are not worthy the glory that shalbe revealed *Rom. 8. 18*. Here then is no room for Papists merits. Yet we must walk worthy of God with suitableness; and if we do not so, the Lord will not owne us. You know the story of the guests in the Gospel, and how they were invited to the supper; one pretended one thing, another another thing; one had married a wife, he could not come, yet sure I am he might have brought her with him: another had bought oxen, &c. But what followes in the text,

*Mat.*

*Mat. 22.* Those that were bidden were not worthy, therefore they shall not taste of my supper. So some say for their sinnes, it is their nature; or one occasion or other puts them off, they could not come. None that are *unworthy* of God, shall taste of the mercy of God, neither in the pardon of their sins, nor salvation; no, you get not so much as a taste of Christ, if you walk not worthy of the gospel of Christ.

The truth of this will appeare in the Use, if we consider what this *worthy walking* is.

First, *We must be as it were even the very nature of God*; we should, as *Peter* speaks, shew forth the vertue of him that hath called us, that we may shew what a glorious God, what a blessed Redeemer, and righteous Judge we have, and admire his goodnesse that hath called us out of darknesse into this glorious light; and we must be holy as he is holy, *1 Pet. 1. 15.* How doth this sute with the nature of God, when we walk not worthy of God? God is *just*, *2 Cor. 1. 3.* how unworthy then are we that are *cruel, unmerciful, and unjust*? God is a God of *peace*, *1 Cor. 14. 22.* how unworthy then are we of him, that

2<sup>d</sup> se.

that live in *heart-burning* one with another? We are the image of God, if we please him, 1 Cor. II. 7. What a shame, dishonour, and wrong then is it to God, that we should have his image, and yet be nothing like him? Should a glorious King see a deformed picture of himself, surely he would make that man smoke that pictured him so: And shall we go for the image of God, the God of all glory, and shall we be vile and unclean, negligent and carelesse, and yet go for Gods picture? what do we make of God? will not God be angry, and will not his wrath burn like fire? What, am I a drunkard, a whore-master, &c. is this my picture? Sure I am God cannot endure this.

Secondly, *consider the relation we have with God*; we are the *children* of God, we are the begotten of the Father: doth God beget monsters? doth God beget such children? We professe our selves *servants* to God; the ground of that relation is, that we are at Gods *command*: did God command us to do the duties of Religion thus? No, no, beloved; if we be *servants*, we must be at *his* command. We professe our selves *sheep of his pasture*; but do we live

live as if we fed on his Commandements? Is this to live worthy the commons that Christ hath put us in, which is such rich food of salvation? How unworthy is this? *If I be a father, where is mine honour? If I be a master, where is my feare?* Mal. 1. 6. Is not this rather to dishonour God, that a childe should have a worthy man to his father, and be a lout himself? what indignity is this that we put on God? Let us examine our selves whether we walk *worthy* of God, or no. I speak to the *professors* of the gospel; for it is certain, that they that professe it not, are unworthy; you that are yet in the gall of bitternesse, and in the bond of iniquitie, are not worthy.

For first, *Christianitie is a trade*. What profession soever thou art of, that is thy trade: will a man say to a Physitian, what, cannot you keep your Physick to your self? must you needs make profession of it? Or will a man go to a shoo-maker and say, Cannot you keep your shooes and trade to your self? So Christianitie is a Profession, and thou art unworthy of it unlessse thou professe it.

Secondly,



Secondly, To what end is a trade? it will do a man no good unlesse he professe it; Every man in his calling lives on his calling; then, if he live by it, he must walk *worthy* of it. A Lawyer may die for all his calling, if he professe it not: Dost thou walk in no calling nor profession? Undoubtedly, thou wilt get no living by it?

Thirdly, *Christianitie is an Order*. If a man be a Papist, yet he cannot be a *Franciscan*, unlesse he professe himself to be of that Order. So if we be Christians, Christ is the father of that order. *Jesus Christ the High-priest of our profession*, Heb. 3. 1. he is the Father of all Christianitie, and thou canst not be a Christian, unlesse thou professe that Order. *Let your light so shine &c.* saith our Saviour, or else you walk not worthy of God. I speak this to those that *professe* Christ; for a man may professe a trade, and yet not walk worthy of it.

For first, *If we walk worthy of God, then our labours answer all the cost God hath bestowed at*. That ground is unworthy tillage, that will not pay the cost that is bestowed on it; that Scholler is not worthy to be maintained

rained, that doth not answer the cost of his Parents. So, my beloved, if you walk *worthy* of God, answer the charges that God hath been at with you. It hath cost God his *Son* to redeem you, and what are you the better? The work of his Spirit comes to enlighten us; the labour of his Ministers to teach us: Now what are we the better for all this? It hath cost God abundance of *Mercie* to allure us, abundance of *Judgement* to terrifie us, many *Corrections*, and above all he is *patient* to beare with us; and this is a mercie of mercies. A man will shew *all* he hath, before he shew his *patience*; a man may shew himself *kind*, and if he be much wronged, he will say, *What, will you try my patience?* I tell thee, God hath suffered his *patience* to be tyred by us a long time, and he hath been at a great deal of cost with us; but have we answered it? if we have not, we are *unworthy* of God. God hath been at a great deal of cost to make you love one another, and shall there be heart-burning still? Good ground brings forth good herbs meet for use, not only herbs, but *meet* herbs: so if you be good children to God, you will bring forth fruit *meet* for

K                      God;

God; otherwise, if God have been at all this cost, and you secure, and strangers still one from another, and never the better, you are neer unto cursing, your labour is not to profit in the Word, and so you answer not God the cost that he hath been at with you. I fear me, God will remove his candlestick, or if he continue it, you shall have hardnesse of heart with it: For since those rents have been, how hath the number of believers decreased? when was one converted? when was a whore-master or a drunkard renewed, unlesse it be to take a higher degree in sin? No, no, the Gospel hath done child-bearing; and surely this is the cause; We walk not *worthy* of it.

Secondly, *If we walk worthy of God, then we walk with God in white.* I have a few names, &c. *Rev. 5.4.* for they are worthy, &c. *In white,* (i.e.) in true love and holinesse, with white robes of puritie, clothed with the righteousness of Christ: but if you be of the black qualities of the *world*, you walk not *worthy*, you edifie not your selves, nor others; this kind of walking is for the men of the world, 'tis for them to stand at a stay in religion; 'tis for

for them to hear and not to practise ; these are black qualities ; but if you walk *aright*, you walk with me in *white* , saith God ; those that walk aloof, walk unworthy, like base Rogues who are not admitted into the Kings presence.

Thirdly, *If we walk worthy of God, we do not disappoint Gods account.* God accounts us sincere and undefiled, as a Virgin unspotted pure in heart ; Such as are renewed, the Lord calls all that are his children by this name. Now if you walk so, as the world may tax you for pride, covetousnesse, hatred, or *any* other vice ; this is not to walk *worthy* of God, but to disparage Gods account ; God counts you righteous, and the world censures you, and sayes you are not, and that because of your ill carriage, and so Gods judgement seems not to be right. *They that shall be counted worthy, &c. Luk. 20. 35.* they that enjoy Gods glory, are counted *worthy* ; God counts them worthy, Christ counts them worthy, conscience and the world counts them worthy : but do you think that the wicked shall say at the last day that they were *worthy* ? No, no, this were a disparagement to God.

Fourthly, *If we walk worthy of God, then we are importunate beggers*; that begger that will not beg hard, is unworthy of an alms; so we are unworthy of mercie, if we beg not hard for it: *Watch therefore and pray alway, that you may be counted worthy, &c. Luk. 21. 36.*

Fifthly, *If we walk worthy of God, then we adde humiliation to every dutie we doe to God.* It is true, all our prayers are not accepted, unlesse they be worthy; our receiving the Sacrament is cursed in Gods sight, unlesse it be done worthily; but yet not as if there were any *inherent* righteousness in man; no, no. *Luk. 6. 6. I am not worthy*, that is, I think not my self worthy. Here is the worthines of all our wages, if we pray in faith, and adde humiliation to our prayers; we must obey God, and adde *humiliation* thereunto, we must adde unto every good duty humiliation; so that if we be *worthy*, we are the *more humbled*. This is a dutie of great moment; it is such a dutie, as if we walk not worthy of God in humiliation, we are not capable of the gospel, nor pardon of sinne, if we be not content to be ruled by Christ. If the house be worthy, let your peace abide  
upon



upon it, *Mat. 10. 11.* The peace of Gods Ministers is peace to the conscience; and the conscience is at peace, if sinne be pardoned: So that if *this place*, this congregation, be not worthy that they should have pardon of sin preached, they are not *capable* of it. The world must be pulled down, self-will and self-lust must be lamed and mortified, to do as the Lord will have it; that man is not capable of the gospel, that will not be ruled by it.

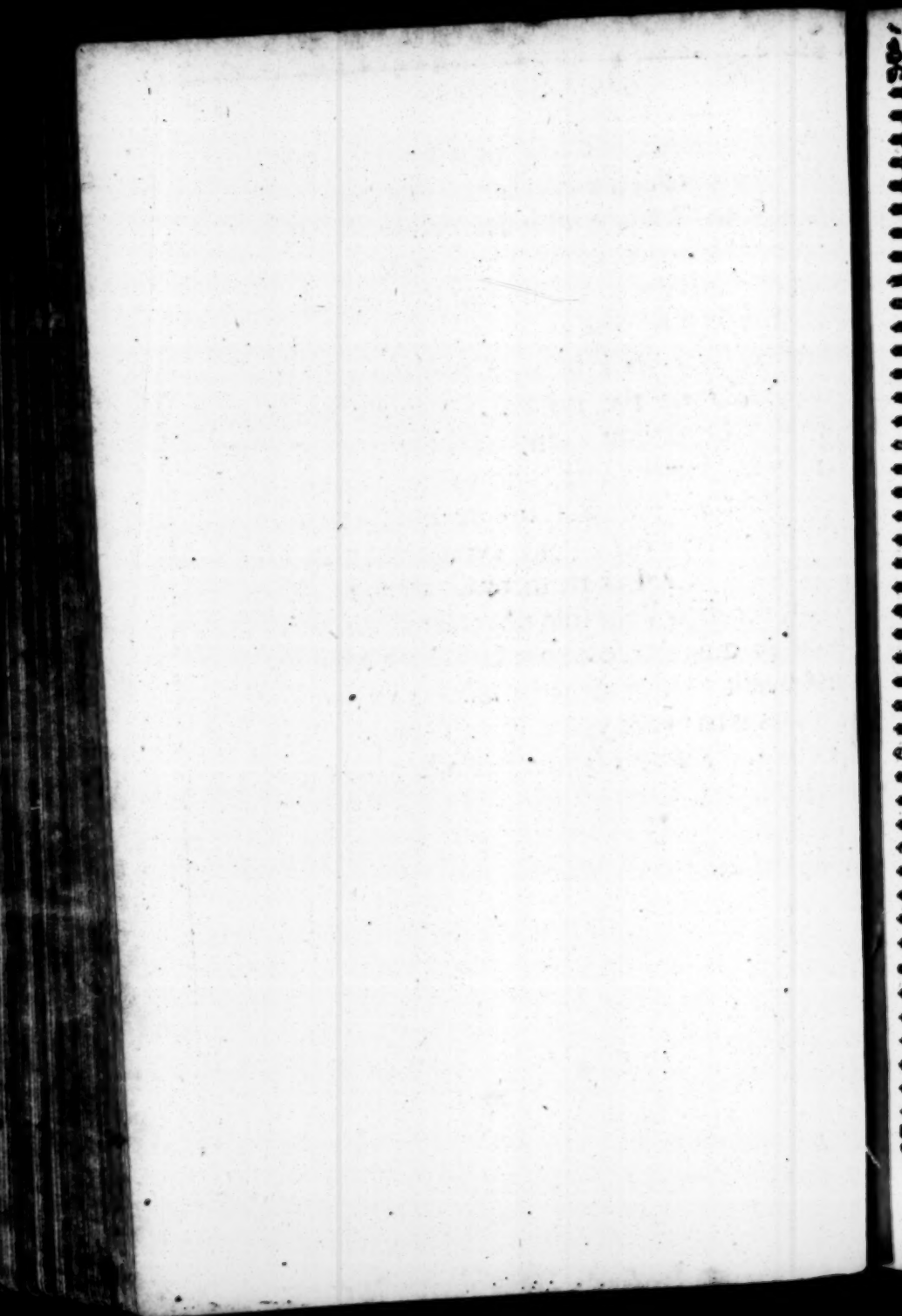
In the second place, let us consider, *If we walk not worthy of God, we walk worthy of somewhat else*; if not of God, then of hell, vengeance, and condemnation: Let us assure our selves, of whatsoever we walk worthy, that we shall have. I speak not of worth of *proportion*. Let a man be ignorant, if he be thought worthy of hell, then to hell he shall go; none shall go to hell, but those that are unworthy of heaven; and none shall go to heaven, but those that have the tokens of heaven about them. Fill her with blood (saith God) *Rev. 15. 6.* as she was worthy of blood, so God would give her blood her belly-full; so when men walk on in their sinfull courses, as they are worthy, so shall they have.

Secondly, *You are guilty of Christ, if you walk not worthy of Christ.* It is a damnable thing for a man to be thought or found guilty of perjurie; but to be thought or found guilty of Christ, this is the greatest of all. Beloved, you are guilty of Christ, if you walk not worthy of Christ: see it in one branch of a Christians walk. If a man receive the *Sacrament* unworthily, he is guilty of Christ, 1 Cor. 11. 27. If a man walk unworthily in any one dutie, he is guilty of Christ, and the death of Christ shall be laid upon him: Oh, what then will become of them who walk unworthily in all the duties of Christianitie? *Judas* betrayed Christ, and thou art guilty; *Pilate* condemned him, and thou art guilty; so &c. His blood lies on thy soul, and thou shalt answer for it, if thou get not into Christ. Thus you see, if we walk not worthy in one dutie, we are guilty of all.

Thirdly, *If you walk not worthy of Christ, you shall be condemned;* the sentence of condemnation is on you for ever. *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own damnation;* and this is but one branch. So he that *prayer*, or *professeth*

*feffeth* the name of Christ unworthily, what ever duty it be, if a man labour not to do it futable to God, it is his *damnation*. That prisoner is unworthy of a pardon, that will not stand to the conditions of his pardon, and be ruled by the Judge. Even so, you that will not walk holily according to the *conditions* of the gospel, you are not worthy of pardon, and you shall never enjoy it; for the Lord knows beforehand who are *worthy* walkers before him. Hath God children here, and vould they be so accounted? Let them vwalk *worthy* of God, let their light shine, &c. let them labour to quit the cost that God hath been at; vwalk vvith Christ in *all* thy vvaies, for this is to vwalk vvorthy of God in all pleasing. *Let this suffice for Exhortation.*

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THE  
NECESSITIE  
O F  
GOSPEL  
OBEDIENCE.

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The second Sermon.

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BY

That laborious and faithfull  
Messenger of CHRIST,

WILLIAM FENNER, Some-  
times Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in  
*Cambridge*, and late Minister  
of *Kochford* in *Essex*.

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THE NECESSITIE  
OF  
Gospel-Obedience.

COLOSS. I. 10.

*That you might walk worthy of the  
Lord unto all pleasing, being fruit-  
full unto every good work.*



He Apostle having delivered  
unto us the sundry duties of  
*walking worthy of God*, con-  
cerning which we have spo-  
ken; he comes now to *am-  
plifie* it, and that he doth these *two* ways.  
First *generally*, unto all pleasing; Secondly  
*particularly*, in the sundry duties wherein  
we are to please God; namely, to *walk  
worthy*,

worthy, and then to be *fruitfull* in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God unto all pleasing (as it is in the Original.)

Some would have *all pleasing* to be meant of pleasing all men; but this were a sin; for if a man will be a *man-pleaser*, he cannot please God. What then doth the Apostle exhort us unto? to sin? God forbid. Would he have us strive to please all men? this were but flatterie: No, no, there is no such matter in the Original; it is not the *adjective*, in all pleasing, that is, pleasing to all: but in the *substantive*, unto all-pleasing, that is, unto all manner of pleasing: Labour to walk so according to the gospel, being directed in all your wayes according to the light thereof, that so you may please God in all things. It hath reference to the walking worthy of the Lord, that is, in all manner of pleasing to the Lord. And this is not *impossible*;

First, because *God is not a rigorous God*, but kind, loving and amiable, full of compassion and kindnesse, a God easie to please. There be some men that a man cannot please, they are so captious, and so full of exceptions, and so humorous, that a man can

never

never please them ; but God is a kinde God, full of compassion, abundant in goodnesse and truth , and therefore 'tis possible for a man to please God. True it is, if God should require obedience in rigour, holinesse in rigour, &c. if he should do thus, then it were impossible to please him, then he must have other gates servants then we ; but the Lord deals in easie terms, he demands obedience according to the gospel : *When a mans wayes please the Lord*, saith the wise man, *Prov. 16. 7.* where we may note, that it is possible for a man so to walk, as that his wayes may please God.

Secondly, *as God is not a rigorous God, so there is a way to walk wherein we may please him*, and that is the way of sincere walking. It was Gods advice to *Abraham Gen. 17. 1.* We must be faithfull in our calling: see it in *David* ; *I will magnifie God with thanksgiving, and this also shall please the Lord, &c. Psal. 69. 31.* To be thankfull and to obey his commandment is the way to please God.

Thirdly, *the Lord hath shewed us this way*; he might have been at choice whether he would have told us what would be

be pleasing in his sight or no ; he might have left that for us to have studied out, or else he might have sent us to hell for our ignorance in it ; he might have chosen whether he would have come and taught us our horne-book or no. Like as a Master once in a comedy, when his servant could not please him, saith the servant, pray Master tell me what I shall doe to please you ; nay saith the Master, Sirrah, look you to that ; so God might have made us look to that our selves, and that most justly too ; but here appeares the *love* of God ; as there is *away*, so he hath shewed us this way, saying *this is my beloved sonne, heare him. Mat. 12. 3.* As if he should say, goe to my sonne, he will tell you what you shall doe to please me, for in him I am well pleased ; he doth not say *with him*, though that had been true, yet but halfe the meaning ; but *in him* ; get to him, be governed by him, be ingrafted into him, this is the course you are to take to please me ; this is my beloved.

Lastly, as God hath shewed us this way, so there be some that have walked in this way before us. The children of God, in all ages have laboured to *please* God,

and



and that as a child laboureth to please his Father *Heb. 11. 5.*

Thus you see it is *possible* to please God.

Secondly, *as it is possible, so likewise it is a fit duty*, it is very fit we should all labour to please God.

For first, *God is a great King*; now great ones you know looke to be pleased; a man cannot speake to a great man without he say *and if it shall please you. Esther. 1. 19.* If it please the King, &c. such as have *greatnesse*, looke for this stile; and it is fit it should be so, that greatnesse should have the companions of it, which is to be *pleased*. Now who is so great as God? And therefore 'tis fit his servants should *please* him.

Secondly, as God is a great God, so his pleasure is a good pleasure, *ergo* it is fit hee should be pleased; hence it is called the good pleasure of his will, *Ephes. 1. 5.* Look what ever Gods pleasure is, 'tis alwayes good, *ergo* it is fit hee should be pleased, because it is alwayes agreeable to reason; 'tis not alwayes fit we should please men, for they are wicked many times in their desires. See it in *Ahasuerus*.

*rms*; his pleasure was one while utterly to extirpate the Jews; It was *Darius* pleasure to seal an idolatrous Decree; it was *Pharoahs* pleasure to set hard tasks on Gods people, and *Herods* pleasure was to put *James* to death, and it pleased the Jewes too; thus you see all their pleasures were wicked; nay, all men, their pleasures are not always good, and therefore not fit at *all* times to please them; but God is alwayes good, and therefore it stands with equity that he should alwayes be pleased.

Fourthly, *if we will not, our betters wil*, and therefore it is fit we should; Christ was and is our *better*, and he did those things which pleased God, *John* 8. 29. The Angels of heaven think it fit, they blesse the Lord, and they also are our *betters*, see *Psal.* 103. 21. If these think it fit to please God, it is much more fit that we should serve and please him. We argue thus, Will you not do as I bid you? your *betters* will: so then you see they are our *betters* that will please God.

Fifthly, *it is most suitable with our conscience that we should do so*; for if wee should not please God, our consciences would find fault with it. If our consciences

ces condemne us not, &c. *John* 3. 21. then we doe those things that are pleasing in his sight; the pleasing of God is set down as a pleasing thing to our consciences; and can we desire a more fit duty then that which our own selves will charge us with rebellion if we be not conformable unto it? such is the pleasing of God; it is *naturally* in the conscience of all men that God is to be pleased; how often read we in heathen books, *if it please God?* and it is a common phrase in most mens mouths, and therefore a fit duty.

Sixthly, *it is a duty most suitable with humane society*; if all men would labour to please God there would be no hatred, no tale-bearing, no falling out: Oh what a blessed life might we lead if we would labour to please God? this is the true ground of all good fellowship: But what was the reason the Jewes were contrary to all men? It was this, because they did not please God; *1 Thes.* 2. 15. when every one pleaseth himself in his lusts and desires, then there must needs be a contrariety among men; for one mans will is *contrary* to anothers; one will have this, another that; but if all would referre their will to Gods

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will, and agree in one, there would be no contrariety among men.

Thirdly, *as it is a possible and a fit duty, so it is a large duty*; it runs along as Expositors observe, in all our thoughts, words and deeds. It must be at *all* times and in all places, and in all regards. It is I say a large duty, and I will shew it in fixe things.

First, *it is the end of all our duties*; what duty is there for a Christian to undertake, but he is to please God in it? why do we hear, pray, receive the Sacrament, beleeve, repent, suffer injuries for Christs sake, but that we may please God? why must children obey their parents, but that they may therein please God? I can go about no duty; but if I mean to do it aright, I must propound this end, that I may please God.

Secondly, *it is large in that it is the most acceptable of all duties*; and indeed it is the forme and life of all performances; prayer is abomination to God, unlesse we please God in that action; the pleasing of God is that which puts life in that duty which we undertake, *Philip. 4. 19.* the Apostle combines these two, *acceptable and well.*

*well pleasing*; and they cannot well bee separate; if any Sacrifice be wel-pleasing, it must needs be acceptable unto God; therefore it is pleasing, because it makes every duty acceptable.

Thirdly, *it is large, in that it is unconfinable to place or time*, we must not only be godly at Church, but at home also; not only faire carriaged in the company of the godly, but we must be holy in all companies, please God in all places; we must labour to please him *where so ever* we are; it is a duty not conscribed to any place; shall a man please God at a Sermon and displease him abroad by drunkenness and whoring, &c? shall we think to please God in such a place where we cannot for shame break out into unsavory speeches, and at another time, and in another place endure any ungodliness? this is not to please God, but rather the contrary. No, no; it is not limited to *time*, nor *place*; we must *please* God not onely in prayer time, but also when prayer is ended; not in Sermon time only, but when the Sermon is ended also. Labour therefore to please God at *all times*; not on Sundayes only, but on the week dayes also; many will read on



the Sabbath, but never else; but this is a duty to be performed at *all* times; 'tis not as hearing, that cannot be performed alwayes: no, it is a generall duty, like *Aristotles* Universals: and *Psal.* 116. 5. I will walk before the Lord, &c. *Placebo Domino*, I will please the Lord in the land of the living. This contains the summe of all Religion.

*Obj.*

*Sol.*

*The largenesse of it appears in this, that it is in all things:* 'tis larger then the servants duty to please their masters; yet servants must labour to please their masters in all things, 2 *Tit.* 9. 9. But if servants must please their masters in all things, then how can the duty of pleasing God be larger? True it is, servants must please their masters in all things, (*i.e.*) in all that are commanded of God; otherwise they may not; for when the thing is forbidden by God, 'tis nothing but the privation of the thing. Sinnes are *privations*: an Idol is nothing; all sinnes are as idols, they are nothing; 'tis not an *action*, but the *privation* of the image of God that should be there, and of agreeableness to the Word in all things that are not contrary to the Word: the duty of pleasing man must be bounded within

within another, but we must please God without limitation.

Fifthly, *It is large, in that it is an everlasting duty*; it shall be a duty, when other duties cease. Prayer, belief, repentance, weeping and mourning, &c. must cease, when Gods children come to heaven; they must pray no more, fast no more, no, these duties must cease; but this is & must be a duty when they are dead and gone, it is an everlasting duty, it is that which we must carry to our graves, yea into another world with us. It is the fruit of all other duties; we are tryed by prayer and hearing, &c. as by apprenticeship, that so we may learn this art of *well-pleasing* God; if we have not learned this art, we are not capable of entring into life, so that in some sense it is above the commandements: we will keep the commandements, that we may please God; this is the crown of all our obedience, not as if it could be more, but the pleasing of God in these is the upshot of all our obedience to God.

Sixthly, *It is large, in that it is the whole duty of the new man*; only new men in Christ can please God, unregenerate men cannot please God; let them give alms,

*¶* *Q. c.* yet if they be not *new creatures*, they cannot please God; let them do actions, though never so good for *manner* or *meaning*, yet they are worthlesse in the hand of an *unregenerate* man. *They that are in the flesh cannot please God*, Rom. 8. 8. He speakes not of such as are *married*; for *Zacharie* and *Elisabeth* were married, and they pleased God: but those that *walk* after the flesh as *unregenerate*, *unsanctified*, *unpurified*, such as live in sin, none of these can ever please God. Thus you see it is the whole duty of the new man.

Fourthly, *as it is possible, fit, and large, so it is a necessary duty.* The Apostle sets a *must*, and an *ought* upon it, 1 *Thess.* 4. 2. It must be done, there is a *necessity* laid upon it. It must be done.

For first, *we have no saving grace, unlesse we labour to please God*; it comes from Gods good pleasure, and it goes to Gods good pleasure. God is well pleased in his image, and grace is the image of God: Now then, if a man please not God, it is because he hath no grace: Thou thinkest Christ did die for thee, thou thinkest a lie, why? thou hast no saving grace. *Let us have grace*, saith the Apostle, *that we may serve*

serve God, Heb. 12. as if he should say, without grace it is impossible to please him: therefore you see it is very necessary to please God, 'tis as necessary as grace, and without it we are damned.

Secondly, *if we do not please God, we may see what a wofull case we are in*; if God be not pleased to spare us, we cannot be saved. Now a man will be sure to please that man that can hang him if he please; he will not pull his displeasure upon him. *Acts 12.* when *Herod* was displeased, they laboured to turn away his displeasure, and made friends; so we depend on God, and therefore our souls, bodies, and everlasting happinesse or destruction depends on God; and if he be not pleased, what benefit can we wretches expect? Wouldest thou have mercy, and wilt thou not please God? thou shalt be deceived. Because *Hester* pleased the King, he shewed her kindnesse; and God will never shew us kindnesse, unlesse we please him. There is no man so mad, to heap good turnes upon a mans head that will not please him; how can we have the good pleasure of God, when we will not seek to please God? Before *Enoch* was translated, it was said

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he pleased God, Heb. 11. 5. God would never have brought him to heaven, if he had not been pleased with him. So before he *translates* thee from earth to heaven, before he delivers thee from damnation, thou must be sure to please God.

Thirdly, *if we labour not to please God, God knowes what infinite dangers we are ever in*; in the morning he may brain us, or wee may die and perish in our sleep, or in any action; God knowes what mischief may befall us if we please not God. If a man prove a Traitor to the King, God knowes what the King will do unto him; the wrath of a King is as the roaring of a Lion; Oh then what is the displeasure of the judge both of quick and dead? If God be displeased with us, God knowes what will become of us, we cannot eat a meales meat safely, wee may be choakt for ought we know; we cannot be secure one moment; It may be this is the moment he meanes to disgrace thee, to lay rottenness on thy heart; It may be he will lay the curse of heaven upon thee before thou goe home and be no more seen; but if thou please God *Eccles. 9. 7.* come what can come,



nothing can come amisse to them that pleaseth the Lord but if thy wayes *please* not the Lord, thou livest in a damnable condition.

Is it so that the duty of pleasing God is so possible, fit, large, and necessary? here then three sorts of men are condemned,

First those that please not God. Do you thinke then that this is pleasing to God that there should be so many Ale-houses in the Towne, or in any such place as this where the Gospel hath been so long taught, that there should be so many prophane Esau's which walke after the stubbornnesse of their owne hearts? Do you think that it is pleasing to God that you should think hardly of them that think best of the Word? Think you, is it best pleasing to God, that you should have *inordinate* courses in your families, that after so much preaching, yet many of you should be still in your sinnes? Is this pleasing to God? Oh consider what you pull upon your selves, viz. *wrath*, yea wrath to the utmost. It is a grievous thing for a man to pull the wrath of a King upon him; You shall not do this on pain of *our* displeasure.

pleasure. Do then, if you dare. If the wrath of a *King* then be so great, and so to be feared; what then is the wrath (and that to the utmost) of the *everliving God*? Destruction and damnation to the *utmost*; God will shew no mercy to them that make no conscience to please him.

Secondly, *this condemns those that please men*. If it be so necessary to please God, what will then become of men-pleasers, as such there are, and too too many amongst us, that carry tales, &c? why? because they will *please* such and such men: Such are many of your children and servants in Alehouses, that can fill pot after pot, and that because it is their masters pleasure that it should be so: But what will become of this in the end? *If I should please men, &c.* Gal. I. 10. If not the servant of God or of Christ, then I must needs be the servant of the Devil. I, even *I Paul*, if I should seek to please men, I were none of the servants of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, *this also condemns those that please themselves*. Many there are that are self-pleasers, which walk after their self-wills, self-conceits, self-desires, and self-affections.

affections. It is pleasing to them to drink, to swagger, to dice and to card; It is pleasing to them to shuffle over the ordinances of God; why? because they have other things to do. Oh think, I beseech you, what a grievous evil you pull on your heads, that are *self-pleasers*; You draw down upon you more then swift damnation. How can that be, will you say? Yes, a man may pull down more then naked damnation; *double* damnation is more then *single*; now if you please your selves, live as you list, do as you list, you pull on your selves damnation with a mischief. God will reserve all the wicked for the day of judgement to punish them, 2 Pet. 2. 9. but chiefly them that are *self-pleasers*, unto whom he gives special marks; as first, *unclean persons*; 2. such as *rebell agianst God*; 3. *Presumptuous*, such as build castles in the aire (as we use to say) on Gods mercy; 4. He reckons the *self-willed*, in the Original *self-pleasers* (i.e.) when a man follows his own will and pleasure. These are they that God will *chiefly* cast into *damnation*: this is to pull damnation, and more then damnation upon thee. *And thus, by Gods assistance, you have seen the prosecution of this Point.*



A  
CAVEAT  
AGAINST LATE  
REPENTANCE.

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In a SERMON

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BY  
That laborious and faithfull  
Messenger of CHRIST,  
WILLIAM FENNER, Some-  
times Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in  
*Cambridge*, and late Minister  
of *Kochford* in *Essex*.

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# A · C A V E A T

*against*

## Late Repentance.

LUKE 23. 24.

*And he said unto Jesus, Lord remember me when thou comnest into thy kingdome.*



His is spoken from the good Thief on the Crosse, *And he said unto, &c. Extraordinary cases never make a common rule: The ordinary rule is this, As is a mans life, so is his death. 'Tis a common axiome, and it is as true as common, Qualis vita, finis ita; a good life cannot choose but have a good death,*

death, and a wicked life a cursed end: this is the *ordinary* rule.

Neverthelesse there are *extraordinary* cases wherein it may be otherwise, and these cases are referred to four heads.

First, *when it pleaseth God to shew his prerogative royall*, he may convert a man at the last gaspe, and give unto the last even as unto the first, *Mat. 20. 13.* his grace is his owne, Christ his owne, Heaven is his owne, and he may doe with his owne as he will; this is Gods *prerogative*; as a King may pardon an old beaten Traitor, and thereby shew his prerogative: but this is not *ordinary*.

Secondly, *when a sinner hath not had meanes of salvation in this life, but only at his death*; as when *S. Paul* came unto *Corinth*, many were there lying on their death-beds, *S. Paul* converted some of them, *1 Cor. 15. 29.* Alas, they were Pagans before, they never had the means of salvation before; yet so it pleaseth the Lord sometimes to step in and convert a sinner that never had the *meanes* before: but this case is not *ordinary* neither; for now we have the means and health.

Thirdly, *when it comes to passe that a sinner*

*sinner is made an example to all the world,* as when a thief is brought to the gallows, & the Lord converts him: And for ought we know; this was the case of *Achan*, Jos. 7. 25. he was converted perhaps, when the stones flew about his eares.

Another extraordinary case is, *when the Lord may be as much honoured by a mans death, as he hath been dishonoured by his life.* In such a case some live, and it pleaseth the Lord to giue repentance unto life: And this was the case of this Thief; he did as much honour God at his death, (as you shall see in his repentance) as many whose lives were spent in all holinesse.

The priviledges of a few men make no common rule; men deal with repentance (as a Divine speaks) as they do with their Wills, they put them off to the last gasp; so they put off repentance to the last hour, like *Achitophel*, that never set his house in order till he went and hanged himself. As it is said of the serpent, it growes crooked all the dayes of his life, and when it dies then it straightens it selfe: So many walke perversly while they are well, and then to straighten all, cry God mercy when they are a dying, as the heart of

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oak, that never growes soft till it is dead and rotten ; so they never soften their hearts with repentance, till they see they must die, and then they fall to their beads and say, Was not the Thief converted at the last? and did not the Thief on the crosse find forgivenesse? and why then may not I? Thus they bear themselves on the example of the Thiefs conversion. I dare be bold to say, that this Thief never stole more goods in his life, then his example hath stollen souls from heaven after his death. Therefore I have chosen this Text, to let you all know that the repentance of this Thief was no *ordinary* thing, nay, to us an *extraordinary wonder*, and therefore there is no trusting to it; For, for a man to be carelesse while he is well, hoping to speed with repentance at the last, is vain.

Now that this his *repentance* was *extraordinary*, I prove it by *five* arguments.

First, *because it was one of the wonders of Christs passion*: now Christs passion was full of wonders, and they were of two sorts, *Corporall* and *Spiritnall*.

The first wonder was in the *heaven*, the Sun was ecclipsed, the Moon then be-  
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ing at the full, which is a miracle in nature. To shew that Christ the Sun of righteousness was eclipsed at that time; for there was darknesse over the face of the whole earth, *Mark 15.33.*

The second wonder was in the *temple*, the vail of the temple did rent, *vers. 38.* to shew that the ceremonies therein contained were abrogated, the substance being then present.

The third wonder was in the *rocks*, the hard rocks clave, to convince the hardness of those that did not rent their hearts.

The fourth wonder was in the *earth*, *Mat. 27.31.* the earth did quake at the sight thereof, to upbraid those that quaked not.

The fifth wonder was in the *sepulchres*, many graves were opened, to shew the vertue of Christs passion.

And as there were wonders *corporall*, so there were wonders *spirituall*.

First, the *Centurion* glorified God, saying, This was the Son of God, *Mat. 27.54.* Secondly, there was a wonder among the people, *beholding the things that were done;* they smote their breasts, and returned. A third wonder was on this *thief*, for he

was converted; *To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* Thus you see that Christs passion was full of wonders, so that there is no ground for a man to delay his repentance, hoping to repent as this Thief did, unlesse he will look for wonders. Canst thou expect, when thou liest *dying*, that that he will rent the rocks again, or open the graves, or create new wonders? No, no, thou canst not look for forgiveness, if thou *deferrest* thy repentance: This repentance was *extraordinary*, and one of the wonders of Christs passion.

Secondly, *that this repentance was extraordinary, it may appear by the number;* for of all numbers of men from the creation to that houre, it was never read that any one was converted thus *at the last*, as was this Thief; so that for all that we know, for this one Thief that was *penitent* and so *saved at the last*, the whole world of the wicked and ungodly, that *delayed* their repentance, living and dying in *sin*, were damned for ever. For all that we know, *Er* and *Onan*, *Jeroboam* and *Pharaoh*, as they lived in sin, so the Scriptures plainly shew that they died in their sinnes. What need I speak of those hundred fourscore

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and five thousand, 2 King. 19. 35. all clapt to hell in one night, for all we know? What need I speak of the old world? As they were disobedient in the dayes of Noah, so they are now in chains. What need I speak of *Admah*, *Zeboim*, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, burnt with fire and brimstone? so that as they lived in sin, so they died and were damned in their sins, for all we know. Now what poor ground is this for a man to *deferre* his repentance, thinking to repent at the last houre, when among so many millions of men, only this Thief found repentance? Thus you see it was extraordinary, in regard of the number.

Thirdly, *in regard of the suddennesse of it*. Repentance the work of grace ordinarily takes up the whole time of life, and will require as many dayes as a man lives; this is a *great* work and it cannot be performed on the suddain; and yet that this work should be attained unto in that while he was on the crosse, this must needs be *wonderfull*; nay he had not so much time; for it seems he did hang on the crosse in his sin, the thieves (saith the text) reviled him, *Mat.* 27. 44.

both cast the same thing in his dish, therefore he was not working repentance all the time; this then must needs be wonderfull, that this work should be dispatched in one houre, and God knowes it might have been in lesse time effected. Is it not a wonder that a man that hath no skill in musick should learne that Art in one houre? Is it not a wonder that a boy that knowes not a letter in the book should learne to write and read well and speak good latine in one houre? Is it not a wonder that a man that is an *errant ignorantus*, should attaine to be a good Lawyer in one houre? These are wonders: So I tell you repentance, grace and conversion, are *hard artes*, harder then musick or divinity, harder then all artes; there is no arte so hard as to learne to goe to heaven, and can a man learne this in one houre? if he doe, it is a wonder; It cost *David* all his life time; *Timothy* from his youth studied the Scriptures, and *Hillary* said, *90. yeares have I been learning to die*. If a man had Methusalahs dayes he could no more then con this lesson, now seeing repentance is so long an arte, and we think to repent as  
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the thiefe, because *Philip* was carried to *Azotus* at a trice, *Acts* 8. 30. which was as some affirme 16 miles, doth it follow that another shall doe so too? the way to heaven is a long way, and if the thief dispatcht it in one houre, it was a miracle.

*This repentance was extraordinary in regard of the Evangelicall perfection of it,* though dispatcht on a suddaine, yet it was not done to halves, but was perfect consisting of these seven parts.

For first, there was his *penitentiall confession*, as you may read verse 41. we indeed justly receive the due reward of our death, *q. d.* Tis just with God that I am brought to the gallows, & just it were with God if I were damned; I have lived all my dayes in roving and hunting up and downe, in breaking Gods commandments, and now God hath justly found me out; this is his open penitentiall confession.

Here is his *penitentiall profession*, but this man hath done nothing amisse, all his Doctrine was true, not one jot amisse in all his life, there was nothing amisse; but you Scribes have cryed crucifie him



amisse; thou wretched *Judas* hast betrayed him amisse; he is the Son of God; here he confesseth Christ to be the *Messiah*, and thus he stood for him against all the world.

3. Here is his *penitential satisfaction*; as he had been partner with the other thiefe in sin, so now he labours to make him satisfaction in turning him to God; in the 40 verse, dost thou not feare God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? Alas thou and I have plaid the villanes against God, and are justly damned; But as we have been theeves together, so now let us repent together, and call on God together; dost thou not feare God seeing that thou art in the same condemnation? and thus he labours to convert his fellow thief.

4. Here is his *penitential self-denyal*; he denyes himself, he loves the glory of God more then his owne soule or salvation, mark here how he labours to convert his fellow thiefe and to make him give all the glory to God; he was so wounded to the soule that his fellow thief should dishonour God, as that he laboured to turn him before he prayed for his own soule;

soule; dost thou not fear God? &c. this he said, before he said, *Lord remember mee*; he lets his owne soule lie at the stake while he labours to glorifie God; so that it is plaine he loves God more then his owne soule.

5. Here you may see his *penitential faith*, he beleeves not with a *generall* faith, but with a *saving* and *particular* faith, with faith and assurance he lookes on Christ as his Jesus; he said unto Jesus; there is not one idle word in this text, the holy Ghost sayes he said unto Jesus, he said not that he thought to say so, but the Spirit of God witnesseth that he said so indeed, he spake to Christ as to a Jesus.

6. Here is his *penitential resolution* of newnes of life & new obedience for time to come; *Lord, remember mee*; he acknowledgeth Christ to be his Lord, *q.d.* I have followed the imaginations of my owne will hitherto; all my stealing and other sins have been to fulfill my owne will; but now I confesse thee to be my Lord, and were I to live againe, or any longer, I would for ever serve thee.

Lastly, here is his *penitential prayer*,  
Lord;

Lord remember me ; he acknowledges Christ to be *his* Lord, nay he did not only pray thus, but saith *Basil*, he offered much prayer unto God, even as much as his short time could permit ; these words are but the summe of what he spake, Lord remember mee, &c. thus you see he was no more a thief but a convert and confessor, as *Augustine* observes, a wicked thief to steal earthly things, but a good thief (as we call him to this day) to break through into the Kingdom of heaven, he steals Paradise; thus you see what a *wonderfull* repentance he had in regard of the perfection of it; *faith* was in it, *humiliation* was in it, *turning to God* was in it, *felfe-denyall* was in it, *satisfaction* was in it, and *glorifying of God in the face of the world* was in it; nay he was the only professor of Christ, to the Nations at that time; he had never a servant but this; never a word at this time spoken for Christ, but that which this Thief spake; none to back Christ but this Thief; he was the only professor and confessor of Christ at this time, the only man on the earth that glorified G O D. Therefore unlesse thou expect such a death, to bring such glory to God as this Thief did,

did, never beare thy self upon his example.

Fifthly, *This repentance was extraordinary, in regard of the incomparableness of it;* Never was there such a repentance since the world began, nor shall be while the world stands: For when all the world, Jews and Gentiles, stood in their obstinacie, Priests and Rulers, great and small, all cryed *Crucifie him*; and when the Disciples doubted, this Thief believed; and when *Peter* denied Christ, this Thief repented and confessed Christ; nay, when all the Apostles shewed their heeles, this Thief stood to his tacklings, this Thief maintains Christ against them all; nay when *Mary Magdalen*, out of whom Christ had cast seven devils, when she was afraid to come neer to the Crosse, *Mat. 27. 55.* and the mother of *Zebedees* children, who should have come neer, yet they stood a far off; only this Thief published the gospel of Jesus Christ, and makes open acknowledgement of him to be the Saviour of the world, when all his Disciples and the world forsook him in their obstinacie, and, as the Papists observe, God then had no visible Church upon the earth; so that  
this

this Thief on the crosse put down all the world for repentance, yea the Apostles of Christ. Now shew me such a repentance whereby thou maiest put down *Peter* and all the Apostles of Christ; either shew me *such* a repentance, extraordinary, incomparable, and wonderfull, to make them all ashamed: I say, either shew me *such* a repentance, or never trust on the Thieves example on the crosse. If a man have a hundred miles to go for his life, and but a short time allotted unto him, he had need make haste. Now the way to *heaven* is a long way, and he that can begin and end that journey when he lies a *dying*, is the quickest man of foot that ever yet was heard, this Thief only excepted. If thou *run* to *obtain*, thou hadst need to have the *art* of *prayer* and *repentance*, or else thou canst not overtake them, for they are before thee much.

Use.

*This may serve to condemne those that rely upon this example.* Oh, saith one, did not the Thief on the crosse repent at the last houre? and God is the same God still; and if he repented at thee last, why may not I? How many wrest this Scripture to their own damnation? that live in sin  
with



with this Thief that went to heaven; yet die and are damned, with the other Thief that went to hell.

I will demonstrate this and make it plain, because I desire to convince all that hear me.

First then, tell me *when this Thief was converted?* was it not when Christ hung on the crosse? *Mat. 27. 33.* Christ hung then on the crosse, and was to be inaugurated King over all. Now, *when Kings are inaugurated into their kinzdoms, they shew that bounty, then, which they will not do again all the time of their raigne.* We have of this a sufficient story in the Chronicles of *England*, of King *Henry* the fourth, who when he was inaugurated King, he created 55 Knights, he hung all the streets and lanes in *London* with cloth of gold, he made all the Conduits in *London* to run with Sack, Claret and White wine: this he did when he was inaugurated King, which he never did all his life time afterwards. Even so Christ was pleased to shew mercy and grace unto this Thief, unto life eternall, when he was inaugurated King over principalities and powers, over hell and darknesse. Now as *K. Henry*  
never

never created so many Knights again; never hung *London* streets so again, never made the Conduits run so with wine again; even so the Lord shewed such a bounty then, as, for ought we know, he never did before, nor will do the like again.

Secondly, *Kings when they are inaugurated, they pardon such offences, forgive such taxations, wrongs, injuries, treasons and felonies, as they will never pardon again as long as they live in the kingdome.* So we read of *Charles the 3. King of France*, that day that he was crowned, he pardoned all those that had sinned against the Crown, in what kinde soever they had offended; Why? because he was crowned King, and so he would make *that* day a day of rejoycing. And thus it was when Christ triumphed over hell, he forgave the sins of this Thief, the like whereof we never read of, and for ought we know will never do the like again.

3. Tell me *where was this thief pardoned?* Was it not in *Golgotha*, where Christ was crucified, the place where Christ did triumph, where he was crowned, where he forgave transgressions and sins? there it

was

was where Christ pardoned him. Now as it is with a Captain when he hath gotten the victory, he will set up some monument at the place, that it may be a token thereof; so Christ having wrought the salvation of the world, set up a monument there where he wrought it, whereof none greater then this could be; not the rending of the rocks, nor the earthquake, nor any of the wonders besides did so honour the death of Christ, as the *conversion of this Thief*; who like a Physitian having made an excellent medicine, and desirous to try it, will do that for nothing, which he will not do again for much: so Christ having made an admirable soveraign plaister for the salvation of mankind, so soon as ever he had made it, he makes an experiment thereof on this Thief; as if he should have said, Now you shall see what my death can do. So then you see that the conversion of this Thief was no ordinary, but an extraordinary wonder.

Fourthly, *tell me how he cures by forgiveness*, not by bare repentance only, but by repentance with *Martyrdome*; he did not only nakedly repent of his sin, but he died also a *Martyr* for Christ; hee was a Mar-

Martyr on the crosse; for although he was first hung on the crosse for his evill deeds, yet afterwards when he repented and confessed the Lord Jesus Christ, and maintained him to be the *Messias*, and condemned *Pilate*, *Herod*, and the Jewes, by publishing that he was unjustly crucified, and that he was the son of God; I say though at the first he was hung on the crosse for his sin; yet *now* they let him hang for his religion, as by their own law it was manifest; for they had a law that whosoever confessed Christ, should be punished; so that now he confessing Christ, they let him hang for his religion to Christ, so that he died a Martyr; and verse 20. what a witnesse he gave unto Christ? The other answering, he rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou feare God? &c. As if he should say, thou seest the Scribes and Pharisees feare not God, they have conspired against the Son of God. The Jewes that should have beleaved on him cryed crucify him; *Herod* hath mocked him, *Pilate* condemned him; dost thou not yet feare God? what not thou that art in the state of condemnation, thou that art to be damned within this houre?

is it not enough for them to crucifie Christ, but dost not *thou* feare God neither; Oh what a witnesse was this unto Christ; no wonder if he found mercy when it pleased the Lord to enlarge himselfe so in bringing his soule unto him.

But it may be objected, why is this Scripture recorded, if I may not make this use of it to repent as this thief did, seeing all Scripture is for our learning?

Obj.

You know the common answer, *it is once recorded that none might despaire, and but once, that none might presume.* Christ saved him at the last cast, that when a man is at that *pinch* hee might not *despaire* if he *repent* and become a new creature; and but *one* was saved that none might presume.

Sol.

There are many reasons why this Scripture is recorded.

First, *to shew the sovereignty of Christs death*, and as Christ healed all manner of sicknesse in his life, so his death is able to heale all manner of sins; it is the leaves of that tree only that can heale the Nations, *Rev. 22. 2.* and therefore the Scripture sets downe a desperate example of a

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thief



thief; for a man must be a desperate man, if he be a thief: and Christ did this to shew that he can shew mercy even to a thief; that so all the world may take notice of the vertue of Christs death.

Secondly, *it is recorded, that no poor soul should cry out of his finnes*, saying, I am damned, I am accursed, I am more sinfull and gracelesse then any man, more wicked then any man. I say, do not thus reason; for here is an example set down of the thief, and you know what Christ said to the multitude, of a Thief; *Do you come unto me as to a thief, with swords and staves?* as if he should have said, You deal basely with me, as if I were as bad as a thief, implying, that a thief is the worst of all men, nay as bad as the devil, *Joh. 12. 6.* And it is reckoned as one of their damnable usages against Christ, that they hung him between two thieves, two of the vilest creatures of all: so that a thiefe is an example of a desperate man; and yet you see Christ hath mercy, and gives it to a thief; Therefore if the LORD have enlarged thy heart to *repent*, be not discouraged, but lay hold on CHRIST.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *this Scripture is recorded, that we may not cast off all men that come to the last cast*; all men, though great sinners, must not desperately be cast off: For suppose a man have been a Drunkard, yet prayer and supplication may be made to God for him, and God may open his eyes, and there is some possibility that he may be saved, though it be a thousand to one; yet I say there is some *possibilitie*; for there was one thief saved at the last cast: and therefore a Drunkard, &c. is not to be given over for quite gone. It may be there are a wonderfull company of *improbabilities* in it, yet we cannot tell but that this may be the *second* to whom the Lord will give repentance, and therefore the Lord converted this thief.

Lastly, *this story is recorded, that by it we may be encouraged to believe, and to be converted betimes*. For if the Lord were so willing to receive the *thief* that sought him but at the *last* houre, how willing will he be then to receive thee that seekest him *betimes*? But as for thee that livest in thy sins, and bearest on the example of this Thief; let me tell thee, this story was never penned for thy comfort. The Lord

knew how men would abuse this story; therefore *S. Matthew*, *S. Mark*, and *S. John* omit it; and if we had none to testifie it, all the world would say both the theeves were damned; nay, *S. Matthew* saith, the thieves, *both the thieves* cast the same thing in his teeth: only *S. Luke*, he pens it for the comfort of the godly; he was loth (as it seems to me) to leave it out quite, because some poor soule might stand in need of it. Therefore let me here rap off the fingers of all those that would lay hold on this example of the thief, to *deferre* their repentance: this story belongs not unto such.

First, *because this thief had not the means of life and grace before*; for where do you read in all the gospel, that ever this Thiefe had the meanes of life? perhaps when Christ was preaching, he was pilfering; where do you read that ever he heard any of the Apostles, or Seventy, or *John the Baptist*, or any Sermon in all his life? No, no, he went roving up and down, we have not one title to imply that he had the *means* of salvation; and therefore this is nothing to thee, that hast the *preaching of the Word*, which reproves thee of thy  
 sins;

sins and therefore if thou wilt go on, thou shalt dye, *Ezech. 3. 19.*

Secondly, this story belongs not unto thee; for, *where dost thou read that ever this thief did build upon this hope?* do you think that this thief said, I will steal as long as I can, I know I shall be imprisoned, and I shall be crucified with Christ, but while I lie in prison, I will repent, and then he will have mercie on me? did this poor thief ever dreame of these hopes; did he presume of mercie, and so sin against mercies, and therefore thou that *buildest* on this example, whosoever thou art, it belongs not unto thee.

Tush, tush, sayes the Drunkard shall I be damned? the thief was saved. Thou cursed caitiffe, what though thou shouldst repent and cry for mercie? art thou sure the Lord will heare and pardon thee? when I spake to you said *Moses*, you would not heare, but rebelled, and were presumptuous, *Deut. 1. 43.* Dost thou presume on Gods mercie that hee will convert thee at the last? I tell thee that Gods mercy is good mercie, it is not like the mercie of a wicked Iudge; that is wickedly mercifull, and suffers Rogues to be pardoned; No, no,

no, Gods mercie is good, *Psal.* 109. 21. *mercie* and *justice* are all one with God, and they have all one name in scripture. There is a crown laid up for me saith *Paul* which the Lord, the *just* Judge shall give me (*viz*) which God the *mercifull* Judge shall give unto me; God is *just* in his *mercie*, and therefore thinkest thou to live in thy sins, to sweare, to lie, to be drunk, &c. and yet hope to have mercy? thou art deceived; the Lords mercy is *just* mercy, and he will damne thee for evermore, if thou repent not in sincerity. You never read in the Scripture, that there is mercy in the wayes of the devil: But, *Psal.* 25. 10. all the wayes of the Lord are mercy and judgement, &c. So long as thou walkest in the wayes of the Lord, there is mercy to thee in every step; mercy in Prayer, mercy in hearing the Word, and in receiving the Sacraments; but in the wayes of the devil there is no mercy; for as long as thou walkest in darknesse, security, and all sinfull and vain courses, which are the wayes of the devil, there is no mercy for thee; for, the Spirit of God saith, those that follow their vanities, forsake their own mercies; you must turn from  
your



your *own* wayes ; for the way of mercy lies in another road, in the road of holinesse, humiliation, and repentance, in the road of forsaking all your vain imaginations and thoughts; If thou follow thy own wayes, God will have no mercy on thee, *Jonas* 2.8. He will not tell a lye, to have mercy on thee: Gods mercy is true, and *mercy* and *truth* go together, *Psal.* 98.3. Now if thou be a Drunkard, and dost live and die in that sin, God hath said that he will damn thee, *Gal.* 5.21. Now he should be a liar, if he should not do it, and thou knowest that mercy and truth go together in him: Therefore in time repent. Pish, pish, sayes the Drunkard, &c. I hope the Lord will be more merciful; these Preachers preach nothing but damnation, I hope the Lord will pardon me. Pardon thee, saith God? how shall I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forsaken me, and sworne by them that are no gods, and though I fed them to the full, yet they committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troopes in the harlots houses, *Jer.* 5.7. As if God should have said, I cannot pardon thee. No: why? Thou wilt not come at me, thou hast forsaken

me in mine *ordinances*, &c. Will a Physician cure a man that will not come at him? why, they have forsaken me, saith God, and they will not come at me; as if he should say, I am willing to pardon, I send out my commandements, but they will not bend their mindes to keep them, they forsake these wayes of mercy. Have mercy on them? nay, shall I not rather visit for these things, saith the Lord? *Jer. 5.9.* If those that disobeyed *Moses* law dyed without mercy, *Heb. 10.* how then lookest thou for mercy, that *despisest* the Lord Jesus, even the gospel of his kingdom? Nay, the crosse of Christ calls thee, he wooes thee by his death and passion, and now if thou wilt not *obey*, thou shalt die without mercy. Oh what a cursed conclusion is this: I have a mercifull and a good Father, and therefore I will lift up my head against him; I know he will forgive me; I will break my head, I know where to have a plaister to heal it; I will offer such a man a wrong, I know he will not sue me? Thou cursed wretch! though the Lord pardon ten thousand, yet he will not pardon thee; no, no, thou sinnest with a high hand. But keep your selves in  
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the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, *Jude 21*. Keep your selves there, if you be wise; for if Gods patience be abused, it will be turned into wrath and wormwood, and it will burn like fire unto the nethermost hell: to a man that sins against *mercy*, there is no redemption; this story belongs not unto such.

Thirdly, this story is nothing to thee, because *at that time God was in a way of working miracles*, but now he is not in that way; then he rent the rocks, opened the sepulchres, and raised the dead, &c. Now unlesse thou take God in this way again, never look to have thy sinnes pardoned, if thou goest on in thy sinnes with a high hand. It may be God will not be in the way of working of miracles, when thou art a dying; No, the Lord will shew salvation to no man but unto him that orders his conversation aright, *Psal. 50.23*. thy life must be right, and all thy wayes must be *upright*, if thou mean to find *mercie*.

*But the Thief was converted, without ordering his wayes aright.*

I answer, one Swallow cannot make Spring,

Spring, nor one fair day a harvest; One example cannot make a rule, one instance concludes nothing. This example breakes no square; but it is onely hee that lives *uprightly*, that shall see the salvation of God, and none else. And if thou dost mean to go to heaven, thou must go in the *way* that leads thither, and thou must do those things that are between thee and heaven: there is but *one* way to heaven, and all that go to heaven must walk *that* way; there is *one* faith, *one* newnesse of life, *one* kinde of regeneration, and God will have thee go all these over, he will have thee run through every Commandement; all that come to heaven must travell thither: therefore never beare thy self on this or that example, for 'tis a wonder of wonders, one of the miracles of Christs passion.

I remember the story of an ancient Confessor which proved a worthy Christian, 300 years after the Apostles time: this man was an old man, and had been a Pagan all his dayes, and in his old age he hearkened after Christ, and said he would be a Christian. *Simplinus* hearing him say  
so,

so, would not believe him; but when the Church saw him to be a Christian *indeed*, there was shouting and dancing for gladness, and Psalmes were sung in every Church, *Cains Marinus Victorius* is become a Christian: this was written for a wonder, that he in his *old* age and in his gray haire should become a *good* Christian; so this is a great wonder, and an extraordinary example, that this Thiefe was converted. Do you not think that there were a thousand thieves that at that time lived and dyed in their sins, and so were damned? Were there not many widows in the dayes of *Elijah*, and yet to none of them was he sent but to the widow of *Sarepha*? Were there not many Lepers in the dayes of *Elisba*? yet none of them were cleansed saving *Naaman* the Syrian. So there were many thousands at that time, and yet for all that we know they were all damned, only this one is excepted. Now, shall a man rush into a den of Lyons, because *Daniel* did escape? or will a man cast himself into a fiery furnace, because the three Children were cast in and had no hurt? Shall a man venture to cast avay his jewels or his purse, because one among a thousand



land did so, and found it again? No, no, these are wonders, and therefore beare not thy self on this, or the like example.

The common rule is this, *Live in sinne, and die in sinne*; you that live in sinne now, shall then be damned in sinne for ever, if you repent not. St. Paul knew well that this thief was converted; and yet he saith, *Be not deceived, neither Drunkards, nor Fornicators, nor Theeves, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of God.* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. St. Peter also knew that this thief was converted, yet saith he, *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinners and ungodly appeare?* 2 Pet. 2. 9. St. James also knew this story, Jam. 5. 12. yet if we *swear*, we may fall into condemnation. This is a most sweet example, if by it we return unto God; but thou makest a damned use of it, if by it thou makest thy self secure in thy sinfull courses, hoping to be saved at the last, as this thief was. Consider with your selves, wherefore are the commandments of God? are they, think you, to be disobeyed while men live, and then when men are dying, to cry God mercy? Again, why hath God given you Ministers to preach the Word of eternal life?

Never

Never to preach it to men till they are a dying? No, no, deceive not thy self; thou must hear Gods Ministers preach whilst thou art *well*. What, hath God given you dayes, that you should spend your lives in sin? No, no; saith God, I gave her *time* to repent, but she repented not, *Rev. 2. 21*. And this is the reason that God gives thee time; That thou mightest repent. The Lord could have sent thee to hell as soon as thou wast borne, but that in mercy he gives thee life and time to repent, that so thou mayest find forgivenesse with God, and that thou mayest become a new creature, before thou go hence and be no more seen. You that think to repent, resting on the example of this thief, take heed lest the Lord put you off: therefore labour to *obey* whilst it is called *to day*, and make use of the Word whilst it is founded in your eares, before these things be hid from your eyes.

— 25 —

THE  
SOVERAIGNE  
VERTUE  
OF THE  
GOSPEL.

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IN A SERMON

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BY  
That laborious and faithfull  
Messenger of CHRIST,  
WILLIAM FENNER, Some-  
times Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in  
*Cambridge*, and late Minister  
of *Rochford* in *Essex*.

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THE  
Soveraigne Vertue  
OF THE  
G O S P E L.

PSAL. 147. 3.

*He healeth them that are broken  
in heart, and bindeth up their  
wounds.*



Ere are two things con-  
tained in this Text: the  
*Patients*, and the *Physiti-*  
*an*,

First, the *Patients*; the  
*broken in heart*.

Secondly, the *Physitian*, Christ, it is he  
that healeth and bindeth up their wounds.

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The Patients here are felt and discerned to have *two* wounds or maladies; First, brokennesse in heart; Secondly, woundednesse: He binds up such.

Brokennesse of heart presupposeth *wholenesse* of heart: Wholenesse of heart is twofold; either wholenesse of heart *in sinne*, or wholenesse of heart *from sinne*.

First, wholenesse of heart *from sinne*, is, when the heart is *without sinne*; and so the blessed Angels have whole hearts, and so *Adam* and *Eve*, and we in them before the fall, had *whole* hearts.

Secondly, wholenesse of heart *in sinne*; so the Devils have whole hearts, and all men since the fall from their conception, till their conversion, have whole hearts; and these are they that our Saviour intends, *The whole need not the physitian, but they that are sick*. The hearts that are whole, need not the physitian, but they that are broken and sick. Sinne is in the godly, and they are sick of it; even as when poyson is in a man, it makes him sick; why? because the poyson is contrary unto him. But sinne is in the wicked, and they are not *sick* of it; as poyson is in a toad, and the toad is not sick, because a toad is of  
that

that nature which the poyson is ; and therefore he needs not a phyſitian. Will a Phyſitian go to cure a Toad ? ſurely no, he will rather kill it, he wilt not cure it. So, as long as a man is not ſick at the *heart* of his ſin, Chriſt will rather kill him than *cure* him. When a man ſayes he is ſick, and yet can ſleep, eat, drink, and work, and look as well as ever he did, feels no pain, nor any thing to trouble him, what need hath this man of a phyſitian ? So when a man lives in ſinne, yet never breaks his ſleep for it, but mindes his pleaſures, his profits, hath never the more pain nor anguiſh in his ſoule, he is *ſoule-whole*, and heart-whole, what need hath he of a Phyſitian ? This is a man *whole* in his ſins.

The wholenefſe of the heart is called *fallow-ground*, Jer.4.4. for it is like an unbroken field, not tilled nor manured ; there can be no harveſt, becauſe the ground doth lie fallow ; ſo there can be no harveſt of *grace* in that man, whoſe heart is fallow and unbroken ; and therefore to repent and to break the heart, in Scripture is called the putting of ones hand to the plough, *Luke 9.62.* to plough up the fallow ground of the heart.

Brokenness of heart may be considered two wayes; First, *in relation to wholenesse of heart in sinne*: so brokenness of heart is not a maladie, but an inchoative cure of a desperate maladie.

Secondly, *in relation to wholenesse of heart from sinne*; and so it is a maladie or sickness, and yet peculiar to one blood alone, namely Godsele<sup>ct</sup>; for though the heart be whole, yet it is broken for its sins: as a man that hath a barbed arrow shot into his side, and the arrow is pluckt out of the flesh, yet the wound is not presently healed; so sinne may be pluckt out of the heart, but the scar that was made with plucking it out, is not yet cured. The wounds that are yet under cure, are the plagues and troubles of conscience, the sighs and groanes of a hungering soule after grace, the stinging poyson that the blow hath left behind it; these are the wounds.

Now the heart is broken three wayes. First, *by the Law*: as it breaks the heart of a thief to heare the sentence of the Law, that he must be hanged for his robbery; so it breaks the heart of the soule, sensible to understand the sentence of the Law:  
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Thou shalt not sin; if thou do, thou shalt be damned. If ever the heart come to be sensible of this sentence, *Thou art a damned man*, it is impossible to stand out under it, but it must break. *Is not my word a hammer that breaks the rocks in peeces?* Jer. 23. 29. that is, Is not my word, my Law a hammer? Can any rock-heart hold out and not be broken with the blowes of it? Indeed thus far a man may be broken, and yet be a reprobate; for they shall be all thus broken in hell, and therefore this breaking is not enough.

Secondly, *by the Gospel*; for if ever the heart come to be sensible of its blow, it will break all to shatters. *Rent your hearts, for the Lord is gracious, &c.* Joel 2. 12. When all the shakes of Gods mercy come, they all cry, *rent*. Indeed the heart cannot stand out against them, if it once feel them: Beat thy soule upon the Gospel: if any way under heaven can break it, this is the way.

*Aristotle* observes, that a hammer may easily break a hard stone against a soft bed; but if it be laid on an anvil, which will not give way underneath, strike it as hard as you will with the hammer on the top, the



anvil underneath props it from breaking, or if it do break, it will not break into shatters ; for the anvil below helps the stone to hang fast together : but if you smite it against a soft bed, it breaks it all to shatters. So, smite thy soule upon the Gospel ; preach the Law as much as you will, preach hell and damnation as much as you will, let that be the hammer ; but then be sure lay thy soule on the Gospel, drive it to the Gospel, smite against this soft bed, and then (if ever) it will break. If you strike a stone against a hard anvil, though the parts thereof would fall asunder, yet how can they flie off, when as the hard anvil will not give way ? the hard anvil on the one side, and the hard hammer on the other side, stop up its way from falling asunder. So, strike the soule with the blowes of Gods wrath as much as you will, and let it be upon the Law ; alas whither should the Law open it self that it might break ? the Law doth but fear it on the one side, and the wrath of God doth terrifie it on the other, yet all this while it is not broken ; the soule all this while knowes not what it shall doe : but smite it on the Gospel, and this, with  
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the Law, rents it and breaks it indeed. So *Joel* he preached hell and damnation to the people of the Jews, and laid their hearts upon mercie, and then the hammer cries *rent*; for he is mercifull, &c. he laid them on the soft bed of the Gospel, and then he smites them.

Thirdly, *the heart is broken by the skill of the Minister* in the handling of these two, the Law, and the Gospel: God furnisheth him with skill to presse the Law home, and gives him understanding how to put to the Gospel, and by this means doth God break up the heart: For alas, though the Law be never so good a hammer, and although the Gospel be never so soft a bed, yet if the Minister lay not the soul upon it the heart will not break; he must fetch a full stroke with the Law, and he must set the full power of the Gospel at the back of the soul, or else the heart will not break.

It is a pretty observation of *Aristotle*, Lay (saith he) an axe upon a block, and a great and mighty weight upon it, yet it will not enter into the block to cleave it; but if you lift up the axe and fetch a full blow at the block, then it enters presently. So if the Minister have not *skill* to fetch a

dead blow at the heart, alas he may be long enough ere he break it ; but let him fetch a full blow at the soule, then doth he break it, if ever. I took unto me two staves, saith the Prophet, the one I called *beauty*, the other I called *bands*, and with these I fed the flock, *Zach. 11. 7.* There is the course of a true feeder of the flock, he feeds them with the *Law* and the *Gospel*; he takes his two staves, and he layes about him, till the hearts of his hearers feel him: and this is the way to feed them, and to break them off from their sins. Thus you see the means that God useth to break your hearts. *He healeth the broken in heart.* Hence observe,

That *Christ justifies and sanctifies.* For that is the meaning.

First, because *God hath given Christ grace to practise for the sakes of the broken in heart*; and therefore if this be his grace, to heal the broken-hearted, certainly he will heal them. *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, &c. He hath sent me to heal the broken in heart, &c. Luk. 4. 18.* If he be created master of this art, even for this purpose, to heale the broken in heart, he will verily heale them, and none but them.

them. He is not like *Hosander* and *Hippocrates*, whose father appointed them both to be Physicians; he appointed his sonne *Hippocrates* to be a physitian of horses, yet he proved a physitian for men; he appointed *Hosander* to be a physitian for men, and he proved a physitian for horses. He is not like these; no, no, he will heale those whom he was appointed to heale: now God appointed him to heale thee that art broken in heart, and therefore without doubt he will do it.

2. Because *Christ hath undertaken to do it*. When a skilful Physician hath undertaken a cure, he will surely do it: indeed sometimes a good physitian may fail, as *Trajan's* physitian did, for he died under his hands; on whose tomb this was written, Here lies *Trajan* the Emperour, that may thank his Physitian that he died. But if Christ undertake it, thou maiest be sure of it, for he rels thee that art *broken in heart*, that he hath undertaken it, he hath felt thy pulse already *Thus saith the high and holy one whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, and with him that is of an humble and broken spirit, &c. Isa. 57. 15.* He doth not only undertake it, but he saith he will

will go *visit* his sick patient; he will come to thy bed-side, yea he will come and dwell with thee all the time of thy sickness, thou shalt never want any thing, but he will be ready to help thee: thou needest not complain and say, Oh the Physitian is too far off, he will not come at me. I dwell in the high places indeed, saith God, but yet I will come and dwell with thee that art of an humble spirit. Thou needest not fear, saying, Will a man cure his enemies? I have been an enemy to Gods glory, and will he yet cure me? yea, saith Christ, if thou be *broken in heart*, he will bind thee up.

Thirdly, because *this is Christs charge*, and he will look to his own calling; To this man will I look, even to him that is of a broken heart, *Isa. 66. 2.* Mark; I will *look* to him, I will tend him and keep him. Neither needest thou feare thine own povertie, because thou hast not a Fee to give him; for thou maiest come to him by way of begging, he will look to thee for nothing; For, *to him will I look that is poor.* &c.

Fourthly, *none but the broken in heart will take Physick of Christ.* Now this is a  
Phy-



Physitians desire, that his Patient would cast himselfe upon him; if he will not, the Physitian hath no desire to meddle with him. Now none but the broken in heart will take such Physick as Christ gives, and therefore he saith, *to him will I look that is of a broken heart; and trembles at my words*, Esay 66. 2. When I bid him take such a purge saith God, he trembles, and he takes it. I bid him take such a bitter Potion, or such an untoothsome vomit, to feare him from sinne; he trembles at my word, and he dares not but off with it: But when a soule doth not tremble, then the Physitian may say let him bloud; but he cares not for being let bloud; he cares not for corrosives, he cares not for his advise and counsell, he trembles not at his word; Christ will never come at such a one; Christ bids thee follow such a diet as *ro match, to pray, to fast, to mourne, &c.* to keep in and to take heed to catechizing, grow not cold by being lukewarme, &c. If thou *tremble* at his word, well; If not, but that thou wilt go on in thy sinnes, and be damned for ever, then thank thine owne wilfulnesse. But if thou bee'st broken in heart, Christ will assuredly heale thee. Suppose

Suppose thou shouldest come unto Christ, be his physick never so soveraign, and thou shouldest take it; yet if thy heart be against it, the physick cannot work. *Imagination* or *fancie* is a great thing in the good or ill successe of physick. If thou carpe at his precepts, as too strict, and except against his word as if it had an ounce of worm-wood too much in it; If thy imaginations thus run against the physick, Christs physick will never cure thee; why so? thou art not broken in heart, to tremble at his word; he will help thee without faile; but then thou must *tremble* at his word, and take his directions, though he prescribe thee to eate thine owne dung, and drink thine owne pisse; take it I say what ever it be, and I will warrant thee health.

*Obj.*

But thou wilt reply, *I have but a little faith.*

*Sol.*

I answer, so had Peter; *O thou of little faith wherefore didst thou doubt?* saith our Saviour, *Matth. 14. 13.* There is a *little* faith, and there is a *great* faith; *O woman great is thy faith, Matth. 15. 28.* whether it be a *little* faith or a *great* faith, so it bee *true saving justifying* faith, it is good physick, & it will assuredly cure thee. It is not  
rhe

the *quantity* of faith that saves a man, but the *quality* of faith. True it is, a great quantity of faith, because it hath more of the quality, more of the truth, it heals more strongly and more steadily; But faith whether it be great or small, so it be true, that doth the deed. Shall the Patient doubt of his recovery because of the small measure of physick that the Physitian gives him? The Physitian gives but a dram of such a powder, but perhaps the Patient would have a pound, when as it may be the state of his body will not bear it. The Physitian observes his measures in prescribing so many ounces of this, so many scruples of that; there lies his skill in giving the true measure; so there is a true measure of faith, *Rom. 12.3.* one man hath so much, and another man hath not so much faith. *Abraham* had more faith than *Lot*; the reason is, because the state of *Lots* soule would not beare so much as *Abrahams*. It is one of *Hippocrates* Amphorismes, *Not too much at once.*

A Physitian finds it dangerous sometimes to empty the body at once, or to fill it all at once, or to heat it or to coole it all at once; it is the safest way to give by little

cle and little ; ſo God by little and little deales with thee ; now he gives thee ſome faith, and then a little more.

*Object.*

*O but my faith is ſmothered; how then can I expect to be healed?*

*Anſw.*

I anſwer, a man is ſick, and Violets will cure him; now the Phyſician makes a compound confection, ſo that the Violets doe not appeare, but onely in oyle ; Now, will the Patient thus argue, I cannot ſee one leafe of a Violet, no nor yet ſo much as colour, therefore I will none of it, it will not heale me? So God gives many a ſoule *unguentum fidei*, an oyle of faith ; now it may be the ſoule cannot ſee one jot of faith in himſelfe, yet he ſhall be cured becauſe there is faith in a confection, a mixed faith though there be none in manifeſtation. Thou weepeſt, mouneſt, doubtſt, and complaineſt, and thou canſt not beleve as thou ſaiſt; yet thou never givſt over crying *my God my God*: well, here is faith in a *confection*, but it may be it is ſo compounded with other ingredients that thou canſt not perceive it; for you muſt know that there is faith ſo great that it breakes out into a flame, and there is faith which is ſo ſmall that it does but *ſmoak* out a little;

now

now whether thy faith be an *inflamed* faith or a *smoking* faith, be of good comfort, thou shalt be healed. *The bruised Reed shall not be broken*, Mat. 12.28.

*But I am broken all to shatters, and I have no faith at all, how then can I hope to be cured?*

Obj.

I answer, as thy heart may be broken, and yet be a right heart; so thy faith may be broken, and yet be a true faith: For it is sometimes bound up in the whole, some; times it is broken, and all to peeces; A man that is broken in heart, although he have not faith bound up together in *one* act, yet he hath it broken in sunder; never a part is missing, though no part closing one with another. The *one whole* act of faith is this, *I beleene that God is my God in Christ*. Indeed it may be thou hast not this faith in the *whole*, but if thou beest *broken* in heart, thou hast this whole broken in peeces.

Ans.

First, thou beleevest that God is a God, there is one peece.

Secondly, thou beleevest that to whomsoever God is a God unto, it is only in Christ.

Thirdly, thou beleevest that he that truly repents, may say that God is his God in Christ.

Fourth-



Fourthly, thou beleevest that repentance is a true harred of sinne as it is sinne.

Fifthly, thou beleevest, and thy conscience tels thee it is so indeed that thou hatest sinne, not only as it is able to damn thee, but also as it is sin, and dishonourable to God; now these are the *parts* of faith in the whole. Thou hast all the parts of the whole, though thou hast not these parts *in* the whole. Well then, thou hast all the parts of true faith; as thou canst not deny if thou beest broken in heart. *Totum non differt realiter a partibus simul sumptis.* All the parts and the whole doe not differ *really*, sayes the Philosopher; he that hath three groats, cannot complaine hee wants a shilling; he that hath ruffe and stock and string, can he be farre to seek for a band? so then if thou have faith in the parts on this fashion, it is certaine thou hast faith in the whole, though it appeare not yet to be whole.

*Aristotle* asketh this question, *whether the parts be before the whole or no*; as for example, whether a man or a finger be first. I will not stand here to determine this question; but this is certaine, that the

the whole is a *relative* thing, spoken in relation to its parts, & it is like the relation begins in the whole; for first, we say that a whole is that which consists of parts, and then the parts are they that make up the whole, and therefore if thou verily beleevest in *part*, thou verily beleevest indeed. Thus *David* was a beleever in *part*, my very soule saith he is consumed with grief *Psal.* 31. 9. my strength faileth me because of mine iniquity, &c. verse 10. I am forgotten as a dead man, &c. verse 12. he was a vessell of election, but yet you may see he was a *broken* vessell; he could not beleeve in the *whole*, for he was afraid that God had cast him out of his mind, like a dead and an undone man; nevertheless he was a beleever in *part*, he was Gods *broken* vessell.

*But I am sure I have no faith, I goe whynning and crying up and down, I look upon my sins with horror, I look upon Christ with horror, not a minime of faith that I have, how then can I be healed?*

Object.

Hast thou a grounded resolution to seek after God come what can come of it? Dost thou desire and long to be united with Christ? Then let me tell thee, suppose

Ans.

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thou hast no faith yet in *being*, yet thou hast something to secure thee from wrath; there is difference between *Fides creditura* and *Fides credens*, between faith *about to beleeve*, and faith that doth *already beleeve*. It is *belief believing* that saves a man: But *belief about to believe*, cures a man from being a reprobate. Though the fruit in the wombe be not yet quickened with a *reasonable soule*, yet it growes in the wombe, feeds in the wombe, and yet it hath no other life in it then may bee in a beast; yet because it is *in fieri* a man, the Mother complains not saying Oh I am afraid I have a beast in my wombe; no, she will wait Gods leisure to quicken it; it is secure enough from being a beast; for it hath such dispositions as will not long be without the soule of a man in the same, though as yet there be nothing in it, but what may be in a beast; But yet the Mother is secured because she is perswaded shee beares a babe in her wombe. So many poor soules are too hasty to censure themselves; for grant thou hast no faith as *yet*, yet if thou beest *broken* in heart, thou art *about to have faith*; only let the word have his full work on thee, unto which thou must diligently

diligently attend, and then this *fides in fieri* will be quickly *fides in factum esse*. Thus the blind man in the Gospel was *about to beleeve* before he beleaved; he had a time of a *fieri* of faith; he was no beleever this time; for he had as yet no faith; neither was hee an unbeleever; for he was about to beleeve. Dost thou beleeve on the Son of God? saith Christ John 9. 35. he answered, *who is hee Lord that I might beleeve on him?* verse 39. Beleeve? yea that I would with all my heart, who is he, and where is hee that I might beleeve? I have been hated for his names sake, I have been cast out of the Synagogue for his sake; Lord thou knowest I would beleeve on him; but who is hee and where is hee? and he is vanished away from me; I have sought him; but I cannot find him. Then Christ told him, I am hee that now talke with thee; and then he beleaved; and Saint *Chrystome* observs that this blind man was *about to beleeve*, before he did desire it in his soule; and so it may be it is now with thee; dost thou beleeve in Christ? who is hee? saiest thou, where shall I find that Christ is in me that I may beleeve in him? I weep and hunger, and

I thirst after Christ; but *who* and *where* is hee? I have sought him in the word; but I find him not; I have sought him in prayer and in all other his ordinances; but I find him not; I would beleeve with all my heart if I could find him. Thus the soule may be *about to beleeve*, though it doe not already beleeve; hast thou gotten this same *about to beleeve*? be not thou dismayed, the plaister is come; and it will heal thee.

Conceive these words aright I beseech you; a speech is not as it is taken, I mean only the *broken* in heart; for otherwise a man may be *about to beleeve*, yet never beleeve; about to be healed of his sins, yet never be healed. Even like the wretch that *Zophar* speakes of, who shall be about to fill his belly, and not be able to fill it, *Job* 20. 23.

There is a twofold *about to bee*; First, either such a thing as is *about to bee*, and that is the nature of it, and it *will never be otherwise*; but still only about to bee. Secondly, or e's such a thing as is *about to be*, and that is the *progresse* of it, and not to rest there, but at the last *to bee indeed*.

Feare



Fear you then, all you that are vain, and as yet in your sins; you are *about to beleeve*, and that is the nature of your faith; it is only about to beleeve; like the officers of the next yeare, who are about to be officers and yet are not. Beloved, never look to bee healed, if you be not *broken* in heart; It may be thou art broken from *some* of thy sins; but if thou be not broken from them *all*, it is nothing; and thou caust not be healed. Alas thou maist be broken in *some* sence, and yet never be healed. There is a *double* breaking, saith *Aristotle*, either breaking into *great parts*, as wood is broken into logs; or breaking into *small parts*, as a stone is broken into powder; it may bee thy stony heart is broken, but it is only into lesser *stones*, thou art fallen from greater sins to lesser, from bouzing and company keeping, to drinking and sipping; from playing and gaming on the Sabbath, to talking of worldly affaires on the Sabbath; from praying not at all, to pray coldly. Alas, alas thou hast a *hard heart* still; when a great stone is broken into lesser stones, the lesser stone is as hard as the great stone; thy heart must bee broken to *powder*,

der, if ever God heale thee.

First, because *Physick wil never cure a man, unlesse it may enter and run into the veines*; and when it is entred into the body, and diffused up and down through all the diseased parts thereof, then it cures; now if thy heart be not *broken*, the *Physick* cannot enter; give a purgation to a stone, it may moysten the outside, but it cannot soake in, to soften the stone; why, because the stone is close; but if the stone were broken into powder, then it would soake even into the heart of the stone.

God opened the heart of *Lydia*, and then the word entred. *Acts 16. 14.* Brethren, you have been under the hands of Christs Physitians ever since you were borne; but where is the heart that is broken? all the *Physick* is lost, the word hath no entrance, it hath skinned the wound; and seared the outside indeed; but the hardnesse of the *heart* is not cured. How long have you been under *Physick* for the curing of your earthlinesse and vanity? how long have you lien by it for your anger and malice, &c. under the means, yet never the neerer? whose hearts are broken? I feare the *Physick* doth not soake, it comes no

neerer

neerer then the outside. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart *Psal. 34. 18.* why? because their hearts are *open* and broken, and Christ and his word comes neere, yea so neere that it toucheth them to the quick; But if yee be not *broken* in heart, no Balme, no Physick can come neare enough to cure you.

Secondly, *thou canst never be cured unlesse Christ cure thee*; now Christ will never take thee in hand till thou be *broken* in heart. A Physitian will not meddle with a *desperate* cure, such a one who is not capable of Physick. Let not any Physitian saith *Hippocrates* set upon a *fruitlesse* cure. Now it is fruitles to give thee any Physick it is fruitlesse to poure grace into thee, or to vouchsafe pardon to thee; this Physick will never heal thee so long as thou art not *broken* in heart; and therefore Christ scorns to take thee in hand. True it is if thou wert *broken* in heart, God would not despise thee; for the sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; so saith the Psalmist, *A broken and a contrite heart O God shalt thou not despise*, *Psal. 51. 17.* so then if thy heart be not yet *broken*, it is yet incurable. Indeed if we consider Christs *absolute* power, no heart

is uncurable; for he can heale it what ever it bee, for all is at his command. But God doth not go according to his *absolute* power, but according to his expreffion and meaning of, and in his word; now the method that God *sets down* in his word, is thus; *first the heart must be broken and then it must or may be healed*; so then so long as thou art not *broken* in heart, thou art incurable.

Thirdly, *suppose Christ should begin to heal thee, thou being not broken in heart, wilt alwayes be taking off the plaister before thou be cured*; sometimes God terrifies thee with the law, and then thou pullest off that plaister; Even like unto a dainty Dame, who having taken physick, and feeling it begin to wamble in her stomach, puts a feather in her throat to cause her to vomit it up before it have its *full* working. And thus many take hopes and comforts and promises before the set time.

In some physick, a quarter of an houres difference may cost one his life; when a man is to be cut of the stone and he bee bound hand and foot, yet if he doe but stirre or struggle before the Chirurgeon hath

hath quite done with him, it is a thousand  
to one but he dies for it; so they in the  
second Psalme had a stone in the heart;  
Christ would have cut them for the stone,  
but they would not be bound, they would  
not endure their cutting, no let us break  
his bonds asunder, and cast away his cords  
from us, *Psal.* 2. 3. men cannot be smit-  
ten at a Sermon, but oh they must present-  
ly have comfort; as soon as once the phy-  
sick beginnes to make the head to *ake*, and  
the stomach to be sick, and the man to be  
exceeding ill, it is a signe that the physick  
doth now begin to *worke*; but if this man  
should devise how to vomit it up, or to  
glister it out, he looseth all the *benefit* of  
the physick; keep this plaister on as long  
as thou canst, if ever thou meane to be  
healed. If the wound be thoroughly whole,  
the plaister will fall away of it self. Should  
a man have never so good a plaister  
and should every foot be taking it off, it  
would never do him any good. If God  
have shot an arrow into thy heart, bind  
the plaister to the sore, and let it there rest  
till the *malignity* of the sore and venom of  
the wound be put out. But if thou be not  
broken in heart, it is in vain to minister or  
to



to say any thing unto thee, because thou wilt not abide the physick within thee, nor suffer the gripes that thou must suffer if ever thou be *healed*. And therefore all you that are *broken* in heart, in any *measure* or *manner*, be of good cheer, the Lord will heal you ; he healeth the broken in heart.

. See here these particulars.

First, *for the seasonablenesse of it*, when it is a seasonable time to be healed, and that is when the heart is in *need*, and it is in need when it is broken ; as a man is in need of meat, when hee is hungry ; so a man is in need of meat, when hee is broken in heart : God will give thee that which thou needest, and that in due season sayes *Augustine*. In an *acceptable time have I heard thee*, Esay 49. 8. God looks when it will be most *seasonable* to give grace, and then he gives it ; therefore wait, never complaine of Gods delaying his hand ; if he do, it is but for a *better* season ; I have need of healing *already* sayest thou ; but if God do not *yet* heal thee, then thou must know it is not yet *seasonable*, and the more need thou art in, the better welcome is help when it commeth.

Secondly,

Secondly, *when it is most profitable for thee*; when he is broken in heart, it will do him good to be healed; but if God should heale thee before, it would hurt thee; when the *Corrosive* hath wrought out his worke, then it is good to have a *Cordiall*; now the *Cordiall* will help the man; but if the *Physitian* should give him a *Cordiall* first, it would helpe the *disease*, and endamage the man. Comfortable *Cordials* before the time have bin the damnation of many soules. Oh thou wouldst fain have comfort for thy soule; what? before the *Corrosive* hath eaten out the sin? thou wishest thine own poyson; If God let thee wait for thy healing, understand that he doth it for thy good; only let his *Corrosives* work their full course, and then he will heal thee. Wait on the Lord saith *David* Psal. 27. 14. give not over waiting how long so ever it be, and he will heal thee assuredly when it shall be best for thee.

Thirdly, *in puncto, even just in the very nick of thy brokennesse in heart will his healing come*. It is well observed that the word in the originall is put in the participle indifferent to any time, whether past, present,

present or to come, he doth not set down any time, because he will doe it *punctually*, just at the pinch, when thou art *broken* in heart; Oh then if thou be not yet healed, know then that thou art not yet come to this *punctum*; but when thou art come to it, then thou shalt be healed. What if thou dost lie under the heavy and frowning hand of God? doe not shake it off, but kisse that rod, & humble thy self the more: Sometimes God lets a *broken heart* shake off his hand a little too soon, sometimes again he will not let them. *David* would faine have shaken it off; but he could not; God would not let him. Lord rebuke me not in thine anger, saith hee, &c. *Psal.* 38. 1, 2. How did he know that Gods arrowes stuck in him fast? It seemes that he had been pulling at them; he would faine have had them out, he would have been comforted all on the suddaine, but he could not; God would not let him. Lord rebuke me not (sayes he) in thine indignation, &c. Rebuke me as much as thou wilt, but let it not be in thine *indignation*; chasten me as much as thou wilt, but let it not be in thy heavy displeasure. Oh pluck out thine arrowes, take off thy hand;

I pluck at them, but they stick fast; I shake and rub to get off thy hand, but it presseth me so sore that I cannot get it off. Beloved, it is necessary that some while Gods own people should *bleed* under Gods wrath; for by this means the corruption of sin is purged out. Thus you see in some God will not let them shake off his hand; others, if they will needs have it off, they shall, that they may afterwards see their own folly. Thus many a poor childe of God, in conflict of conscience and sense of Gods wrathfull displeasure, scrapes comfort too soon, and God lets them take it before he gives it: he would have had them first *thoroughly* cured, but they were loth to be humbling their soules so long: but see the event of it, the sore is only skinned over, and at the last the wound it breaks forth afresh, and then it may be they lie seven years together and get no comfort, yea sometimes twenty yeares, yea, I have known some that have lived so thirty yeares. Now they may thank their own folly; for if they would have been ruled by Christ, and been humbled all together at the first, they might have escaped this scouring; but now they  
repent

repent it every veine in their hearts, and can hardly claw it off untill death. I call these the children of God, because they have lyen a long while under Gods hand, and yet stil cry after God, it is a signe they are his children; for Gods children are many times in affliction a long while; see it in *Job*, &c. Neither can I belive, but that all those that lie sundry yeares on this fashion still crying after God, are the children of God; or at the least, it is so to be hoped: for if they were reprobates, and had shaken off Gods hand, pluckt out his arrows, and scraped after comfort, he would either let them fall into a perpetual fools-paradise of presumption or security, or else let them moulder away in despaire, not caring to seek after God in the means at all. And therefore, beloved, pluck not out Gods arrowes too soon; I speak not to all, for some will not pluck them out when they should; but I speak to all such as are over-hastie for to get Cordials before the Corrosive have had his full working. If men be never so little humbled, reformed, or wrought upon, presently they think they be in very good case: the very Heathen could say, we are  
com-



commonly deceived with seeming vertue and grace ; and hence it is that wicked men are humbled by halves, They think, they are thoroughly humbled, when their hearts are broken by halves ; they think they are broken in heart. And as a stick that is half in the water, and half above the water, seems to be broken or bent in the middest ; so these men when they are half in their sinnes, and half out, seem to themselves to be broken-hearted: But if the stick were either al in the water, or al out, would appeare as it is : it seemes to be broken, when as it is not : so, many being half in their sinnes, and half out, seem to be *broken-hearted*, when indeed they are not.

But (beloved) before I can give you the *healing* here in this Text, it is good reason that I examine you whether you be broken in heart, or no. *Prognostica præcedunt Therapeuticen*, sayes *Argastus* ; Prognostiques, and telling the signes and symptomes of the disease, are before the healing of the disease. When we believe a thing to be so, we have a proverb to say '*'tis a signe 'tis so*. Dost thou say thou art broken in heart ? 'Tis a signe 'tis so, thy

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art broken in heart ? 'Tis a signe 'tis so,  
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repent it every veine in their hearts, and can hardly claw it off untill death. I call theſe the children of God, becauſe they have lyen a long while under Gods hand, and yet ſtil cry after God, it is a ſigne they are his children; for Gods children are many times in affliction a long while; ſee it in *Job*, &c. Neither can I believe, but that all thoſe that lie ſundry yeares on this faſhion ſtill crying after God, are the children of God; or at the leaſt, it is ſo to be hoped: for if they were reprobates, and had ſhaken off Gods hand, pluckt out his arrows, and ſcraped after comfort, he would either let them fall into a perpetuall fools-paradiſe of preſumption or ſecurity, or elſe let them moulder away in deſpaire, not caring to ſeek after God in the means at all. And therefore, beloved, pluck not out Gods arrowes too ſoon; I ſpeak not to all, for ſome will not pluck them out when they ſhould; but I ſpeak to all ſuch as are over-haſtie for to get Cordials before the Corroſive have had his full working. If men be never ſo little humbled, reformed, or wrought upon, preſently they think they be in very good caſe: the very Heathen could ſay, we are com-

commonly deceived with seeming vertue and grace ; and hence it is that wicked men are humbled by halves, They think, they are thoroughly humbled, when their hearts are broken by halves ; they think they are broken in heart. And as a stick that is half in the water, and half above the water, seems to be broken or bent in the midst ; so these men when they are half in their sinnes, and half out, seem to themselves to be broken-hearted: But if the stick were either al in the water, or al out, would appeare as it is : it seemes to be broken, when as it is not : so, many being half in their sinnes, and half out, seem to be *broken-hearted* , when indeed they are not.

But (beloved) before I can give you the *healing* here in this Text, it is good reason that I examine you whether you be broken in heart, or no. *Prognosticâ præcedunt Therapeuticen* , sayes *Argastus* ; Prognostiques, and telling the signes and symptomes of the disease, are before the healing of the disease. When we believe a thing to be so, we have a proverb to say *'tis a signe 'tis so*. Dost thou say thou art broken in heart ? 'Tis a signe 'tis so, thy



thy carriage is so mortified; A signe tis so, thy communication is so heavenly; A sign tis so, thy companions are so holy, &c. If a man cannot cast thy water on this fashion, thou art not broken in heart. And therefore *signa tibi dicam*, &c. I will help thee with the signs and sumptomes of a broken heart, *that so thou maiest examine thy selfe.*

The signes I reduce to these two heads.

First, *a breaking from sin*, as a rotten member is broken from the body; so that the heart is then said to be broken indeed, when it is broken off from sin.

Secondly, *a breaking in it selfe*, so that the heart is said to be broken when it is broken with sorrow and selfe-denyall, so that nothing can peice it up againe, but the favour of God. These two made up a broken heart, and therefore they shall be the heads of examination.

First, then doe *thy sins goe thick away from thee*? when the cold is once broken, wee use to say, now it is going away, not in the rhume as before, but in thick fleam. If thou be *broken* in heart, then thy pride,

thy

thy earthlineffe, thy selfe-love, thy dead-  
 nesse to good duties; and all thy sins go  
 thick from thee. It may be thou hast some  
 poares in thy heart,, and thy sins fall away  
 from thee in the rhume, but if they goe  
 not away from thee in thick fleame; the  
 cold of thy frozen heart is not yet broken.  
 The sins of *Zachews* were injustice and op-  
 pression, &c. but as soone as ever he was  
*broken* in heart, these sins went away thick  
 from him, not dropping as if he were loth  
 they should part but in great flakes, *Za-  
 chews* stood (sayes the text) *and said unto  
 the Lord, behold half of my goods, I given  
 unto the poor, &c.* Luke 19. 8. see how  
 his sins went away; every word voids  
 thick fleam.

First, he stood; before he clymed and  
 gazed after Christ; but being broken in  
 heart, he stood ready prest to doe what so-  
 ever Christ would command him. Second-  
 ly, *he said unto Christ*; before Christ might  
 have said unto him what he would; what  
 cared hee? but now that he is broken in  
 heart, here is hardly a word that Christ  
 said unto him of any such matter yet he  
 said to Christ.

Thirdly, *Behold* before his behold

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was

was carnall, hee did what he did to be seen of men, if ever he gave ought, he loved that men should behold, but now all his care was that Christ would behold it.

Fourthly, *I give*. Before hee thought, I *will* give was enough, I will give when I dy, I will build hospitals when I am dead; but now that he is *broken* in heart he gives it *forth-with*.

Fifthly, *the halfe of my goods*; before he counted a penny or a farthing to a poore body, a great matter, a great dole, if given *now and then*; but now that he is broken in heart, the *halfe* and not only of the *superfluitie*, but also of *Esaus* very *substance* and goods, as it is in the originall, I give to the poor, not as men commonly doe, light come, light goe; it may be they feast their rich neighbours, but hee gives halfe his substance to the poor Saints of God.

Sixthly, *And if I have taken any thing wrongfully*, though it were not much; *If I have taken any thing*, though not from the rich and great ones, but from *any*, rich or poore, young or old, stranger or not stranger, no matter *who*; if I have taken  
any

any thing from *any* man by *false accusation*, not only against Law where the Law binds me to restitution, but if I have taken any thing by *forged cavillation*, though the Law will boulder me out, yet I restore him; he did not say, *I give him*, as many will do, calling that which should properly be called restitution for wrong, a *gift* I give, say they; he sayes not so; but he casteth off the thought of a gift, and doth what he doth by way of *restitution*.

Seventhly, *If I have taken any thing*; before he could swallow down the known wrongs that he did; but now that he is *broken* in heart, he makes a mends for the wrongs which *peradventure* he did not, to be sure, If I have taken, I restore, his restitution goes *absolute*; although his wrongs goe upon *ifs*, I restore him saies he; and that not niggardly or scanty, or no more then needs must, but *four-fold*. Thus he reasons; now he is *broken* in heart; his sins go *thick* away from him.

The text but even now called him *little Zachew*, before he had seen Christ; *merito adhuc pusillus quia nondum viderat Christum*. lustly might he be said to be  
little

*little Zacheus*, because then he had not seen Christ; but as soon as ever hee had seen Christ whom he had wronged by these wrongs; as soon as ever he was broken in heart, he became a great repenter, his sins ran thick away from him. As soon as the boyle is broken out comes the matter; As soon as the vein is broken, out comes the blood; true it is adrop of blood may come though the veine be not broken; if the finger be but rac'd a few drops may come, but if the veine be once *broken*, out comes the blood thick and threefold; If thou dost but prop off thy sins now and then, thy heart was never *broken*; for if thou wast once *broken* in heart, thy reformation would come *apace*, thy repentance and thy amendement would come thick and threefold; but if we preach and exhort, and yet see but thin reformation in thee, as a sight or so, thou was never yet *broken* in heart: if thy heart be yet full of *thyself-love*, full of thy pride, lusts, &c. if thy affections bee yet full of earthly desires, worldly delights, vaine hopes, carnall feares; if thy backe be yet full of thy garish and humerous apparell, thy heart is not yet *broken*; why? because  
the



the filthy matter runs not out.

*Zachew* when he was *broken* in heart, his *corruptions ran out apace*; both his unreadinesse to good duties, and his deadnesse and dulnesse to holy duties: Christ need not say much unto him; for he said unto Christ; his desire of the credit of the world ran out, for he gave the halfe of his goods to the poore; his backwardnesse and delaying ran out; for he made present dispatch, *I give*, his very secret and unknowen iniquities ran out, *if I have taken*, &c. All his sins ran thick away from him. why? because *a broken heart can hold no sin*; this is the first signe of a broken heart *from sin*; if it be broken from its sinfull course.

The second is, *if it be broken from its wildnesse*; the Hawk is then broken when it is made fit for the Lurk, and the colt is *broken* when made fit for the saddle; if he be not *broken*, he will not be willing the rider shall come on his back; man is borne like a wild Ass<sup>e</sup> colt, *Job. 11. 12.* so thou wast borne, and so thou hast been, and art thou not as yet broken from it? if thou be broken in heart, then thy heart is tame to every commandment, to every truth

truth, and thy affections are tame to every precept. It is *Calvins* ſimilitude, thou art not yet (ſaith hee) fit for Gods ſaddle, if thou let the Devill, the world, or any luſt ride thee, thou muſt be broken from thy wildneſſe, or elſe thou art not broken in heart; it may be thou art a little *bridled* from thy luſts; alas ſo thou muſt be, yet be wild for all that. Bee not like thoſe beaſts *Pſal. 32.9.* For though they be bridled and held in, yet they are wild ſtill, *Be not like horſe and mule*, ſaith *Ambroſe*, for though they ſuffer bit and bridle, yet had they rather be at rack and manger, or at graſſe in the field, they delight not to be ſadled.

Doeſt thou not deſpiſe to be curbed by the word, to be bitted by reproof, wouldſt thou not rather be free; God caſteth in good motions into thy heart, and thou caſteth them out, and they vaniſh; God putteth in good purpoſes into thy heart, but thou ſtingeſt them off, and doſt not fulfill them, like a wild horſe that flings off his rider. Thou canſt not be croſt a little but preſently thou art wild with choller and anger; thy fleſh and blood cannot endure it, and doſt thou yet ſay that thou art  
*broken*

*broken in heart?* no, no; thou wast born a wild Ass, Colt, and so thou art still. Thou wert borne a wild olive, and so thou art still. Thou was never yet *broken* in heart, never yet broken from sin; if thou wert broken from thy wildnesse, then - every exhortation would tame thee; then thou wouldst be glad to bee reprov'd, and controuled by the word; Thou wouldst leap at *every* commandement, were it never so strict; But if thou count it precisenesse and too much strictnesse to be *holy* and *zealous*, I say thou art yet but a wild colt. Oh my brethren we have many amongst us who are like *Ishmael*, who was a wild man, *Gen. 16*. many wild men, who pray wildly, and thinke wildly, and heare wildly; their hearts are wild gadding hearts; while the word is preaching, they follow their own imaginations.

Darest thou *venture* upon any sin against the Gospell of Christ, and darest thou *live* in it till thou art a wicked Bedlam, The *psalmist* brings all such in as if they were mad Bedlams, saying; *why doe the heathen so furiously rage, &c.* Christ would have bound them, but they forsooth were too wild; they would not be bound; but

say they let us break his bonds, and fling off his cords: they will not bee bound to such strictnesse darest thou sweare and lie and cover, and be drunk, &c? alas man man thou art in a mad vaine. Darest thou break the sabbath; live in thy lusts, &c. a fury hath taken thee, thou art a mad man; God must *breake* that wild heart of thine, elsethou canst not be tamed, it may be thou art *bridled* from sin; but dost thou bridle thy self; if not, thou art wild for all the bridling thou hast: you never saw a horse bridle himself; no, no; it is wilde, peradventure thou dost bridle thy selfe when thou art *not much* tempted; but if thou beest *broken* in heart, thou wilt refraine all provocations whatsoever. *I will keep my mouth, &c.* Psal. 39. 1. while the Devill was before him, as *Hierom* expounds it, or while *Shimei* was before him to tempt him with wicked reproaches and disgrace full speeches, as *Basil* and *Theodoret* expound it, then would *David* keep his tongue as with a bridle when he was greatly tempted to sin. Here then is all the triall; canst thou bridle thy selfe from sin when thou art tempted to sin? if thou bee *broken* in heart, thou canst; but  
if

if thou canst not, thou art wild unto this day. The wild beasts are tame enough till a prey comes before them, and so thou maist be tame when temptations are *down*; but art thou tame when a temptation is before thee. This is a second signe of brokenesse of heart if thou bee broken from thy wildnesse.

Thirdly, *if thou bee broken in heart, then thou art broken from thy pride, and thou wilt stoop to Gods word in all things.* A broken heart is an humble heart, I dwell with him saith God *Esay. 37. 15.* pride is the root of all sin; what is the reason that any dare sin, but because they think better of themselves in their sins then they do deserve? for did a man but thinke he were accursed and a damned wretch in sinning against God, be durst never sin, or did a man feele that *every* sin makes a man *filthy*: yea more filthy then a toad; did a man feele his owne damned condition, he durst not *live* in sin? a man thinkes better of himselfe then hee deserves whensoever he sins against God. *Heare and give care and be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken it, Jer. 13. 15.* If the Lord *speake*, and thou doe not *heare* and *obey*, thou art proud



proud, Oh but I am not proud, then thinkest thou, for I will heare the poorest body in the street when they speake to me; yea and I will and do give the wall to my betters, wilt thou so? wilt thou give man the wall and take the wall of God? is not this pride? *swear not* sayes God; yet thou wilt take the wall of that commandement, and swearest. *Let not the Sun go downe upon thy wrath* sayes God; thou takest the wall of that commandement too; and canst remember an ill turn, a moneth after, so, &c. This is execrable and abominable pride. Thou seekest after thy profits and pleasures more then after the glory of God. I cannot live else, sayes one; I cannot be merry else, sayes another; and I must tell a lie now and then, and must suffer bousing and swearing in my house, or else I cannot live. Thou proud wretch, what must thy mirth and thy credit perke above the commandement of Christ? The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seeke after God, *Psal. 10. 4.* It is wicked pride indeed when thou seekest thy selfe more then God. I tell thee the word hath not broken the heart untill it hath broken the neck  
of

of this pride of thine; never tell me that thou art not proud in thy apparell; if a servant goe never so meanly in apparell, yet he is proud if he obey not all his Masters *lawfull* and *good* commandments, never tell me thou bowest to God or thou kneelest in prayer to God; cluck & crouch, bow and bend thou never so much, yet thou art proud, if every corruption of thine will not yeild to *every* commandment of God; thou art not broken in heart; for if thou wert broken in heart thou wouldst stoop to *all* Gods commandments. Dost thou mock at preaching, &c. tush, thou wilt not be so precise, If ever thou be one of *his*, thou wilt not only obey him, but also be circumspect in *all* thy obedience; nay if thou be *broken* in heart, thou wilt not only stoope to every commandment of God, but also count it thine honour and glory, though it be the meanest office in his service. *Thou art my glory* sayes David, David that was broken from his pride, counted it his glory to obey God, his glory to serve God, yea his glory to be reproached for his sake, Thou art not *broken* in heart till thou count it thine *excellency* to serve God,

We use to say such a ones excellency is in his learning or wit, &c. but he is too *pre-  
cise* and too *holy* as if it were not a mans excellency to be pure and zealous, and to serve God : But I tell thee if thou count it not thine *honor* to be forward for God, and to be nicknamed for Christ, thine excellency to lie in this that thou art godly and heavenly, thou art a proud fool; when *John Huffle* was to write upon the Epistle of Saint *Iames*, he counted it such an high office of dignity that he was confounded at his owne indignity, saying unto God, *Hei mihi laudare te contremisco*; he counted it such an honour to doe any thing for God that he was ashamed at his owne vildnesse. O my brethren God is called the excellency of *Jacob*; it was not their *valour* nor *wisedome*, but *this* was their excellency, that *God was their God*; thy riches are proud riches if thy excellency lie in them more then in God; if thou dost not go about *every* commandement as thine excellency, thy obedience is proud. This is a third signe of a heart brokeu from sin if it be broken from its pride.

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Preached by  
That laborious and faithfull  
Messenger of CHRIST,

WILLIAM FENNER, Some-  
times Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in  
*Cambridge*, and late Minister  
o: *Kochford* in *Essex*.

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ISA I. 57. I.

*The righteous perish, and no man layeth it to heart, mercifull men are taken away, none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come.*

**I**N the end of the former chapter the Prophet reproveth the *speciall* sinne of Idol-shepheards who followed their own pleasures and profits, not regarding their flock. Now he

he reproves the generall sin of security in the people, and namely in this, that whereas *the righteous perish, yet no man layeth it to heart*; and mercifull men are taken away, none considering, &c.

This verse is a complaint of the Prophet touching the people in generall, for that they considered not the *Judgements* of God upon them in taking away the righteous from among them.

In the words themselves we are to consider.

First, the *work of the Lord*, viz. the righteous perisheth and merciful men are taken away.

Secondly, *the peoples sin in not considering it*, not regarding this work of the Lord, which is, that the righteous may be delivered from the evil to come.

By *righteous* is here meant not such as are *legally* righteous by the workes of the law; for so no man is righteous, but by *righteous* is here meant such as are *Evangellycally* righteous, by the righteousnesse of faith in the Gospell.

*Perisheth*, that is, from the *earth*; for otherwise the righteous *perish* not.

*No man considering*, that is, no man lamenting,

menting, mourning, or grieving for the losse of them.

The first thing then to be considered; is from the first part; and it is plaine out of the words of the text, *That all men must dye*; even the most holy and most righteous; for they are all subject to the stroak of bodily death as well as the wicked; There is no remembrance saith *Solomon* of the wise more then of the fool; and how dyeth the wise man? even as the fool, *Eccles.* 2. 16. so *Zacha.* 1. 5. Your fathers, where are they? and the Prophets, doe they live for ever? so that we see *Prophets* and *fathers* dye as well as other men; yea those *Worthies* recorded in the Scripture, *Noah, Abraham, David, &c.* they are all gone the same way, they are all dead.

The first reason is, because *it is appointed unto all men once to dye*, and after that comes the judgement, *Heb.* 9. 27. God hath thus decreed it, and therefore it must be so.

Secondly, because *all men and women are of the dust*; and therefore must return to the dust again; dust thou art, saith God, and unto dust thou shalt return, *Gen.* 3. 19.

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Thirdly

Thirdly, because, *all have sinned*, even the most righteous man; now the wages of sin is death, *Rom. 6. 23.* the most righteous man must dye.

Fourthly because, *as death came into the world by sin, Rom. 5. 12.* so sin must goe out of the world by death; and therefore it is needfull that the righteous die, that so they may be freed from sin.

*Object.*

But some may object and say hath not Christ abolished death? why then do the righteous die.

*Answer.*

I answer he hath abolished death; as he hath abolished sin; now he hath not taken sin quite away from us, for we see it doth still remain in us; neither hath he quite abolished death from the righteous, for we see they all dye; but hee abolished the dominion of sin, so that it doth no longer raige in us; and so hee hath taken away the dominion of death, so that it doth not rage as a Tyrant over us, so that it is not hurtfull unto us as a punishment, but as a means to convey us into a better life. Christ hath taken away the sting both of sin and death; though not the things themselves away from us; yet he will one day free us from them both; so then the righteous,

eous must suffer death as well as the wicked, though not in the same kind.

*Let no man then look to be exempted from death for his righteousness, nor from any outward miseries that may befall the sons of Adam; nay if we are the servants of Christ, we must look for a greater share in these then other men; greater crosses, greater afflictions, greater sicknesse and harder pangs of death do oft befall the righteous, as it did unto this our brother, who though he were old and stricken in yeers, yet the pangs of death were strong upon him. Those whom God will make heires of Eternall life, he suffers them to have a greater portion in these afflictions. But the wicked are fat and full, and die with their bones full of marrow, as Job speakes; they commonly have little sicknesse and an easie death; but the godly do ordinarily undergoe greater pangs; let none therefore think that for his righteousness he shall be free.*

*Secondly, consider we here how few amongst us have learned this Arithmetique, namely to number our dayes, and they are but short, even a span long; who is there almost that thinkes on death? who pre-*



pare himselfe for it? and yet all, even the most *righteous* must die; for God hath placed that fiery blade of death at the entrance into the Paradise of heaven, so that none can enter before they taste of death, and all must taste of it, yea the most *righteous* are not exempted from the stroak of death. This then should teach us to labour to draw our hearts from the love of this present life; and what can better perswade us and wean us from the love of this world, then a due consideration of death? wee know we must all *die*, and therefore we should prepare our selves for it. If any prophane person amongst us knew that this night must be his last night, and that now hee had no longer to live, would not this amaze him and make him bethink himselfe and to prepare for death? If rich covetous men which spend the whole course of their life in providing for the things of this life, did truely consider of death, and that their end draweth nigh, would they doe as they do, when this life and all the things of this life, and all our joyes and pleasures of this world shall shortly have an end? for when death comes, they shall all be taken from us, or rather

rather we from them. Oh how excellent a thing is it then for us to be drawne from the things of this life unto a due consideration of death, and of those heavenly Ioyes and happinesse to come! Oh you that look for these things, what manner of men ought you to be in *holy* life and conversation?

Thirdly, seeing wee all must die, and this present life must come to an end, this should teach us to prepare our selves for a better life; to provide for a surer building, a better estate which shall never perish. Philosophers who were but heathen men, could meditate on *death*, setting it alwayes before their eyes. But this is not enough for us that are *Christians*; wee cannot truly prepare our selves for it unlesse we first build a surer foundation in providing for a better life, which shall never have an end; and this no Heathen or wicked man can ever do. Oh how wofull would that message be unto a wicked man, that was brought unto good King *Hezekiah*, Come, set thy house in order, for thou must die, and not live; and why should it be terribl unto him? surely because he hath no hope of a better life, he hath not provided

ded for a better habitation. Consider then with what comfort thou couldst entertain this message; with what comfort canst thou meet with death? for he is no Christian that cannot in some measure willingly meet with death, for by it we passe unto a better life: for as this our brother spake often, hee that would have comfort in death, must look beyond death; he must not fix his eyes on the *terrors* of death, but he must look beyond to that glorious *inheritance* to which wee are passing through death, and there shall he behold his Saviour putting forth his hand ready to receive him; there shall he see the blessed Saints and Angels whose company he shall enjoy, besides an infinite heap of Ioyes and happiness that is prepared for him also. O my beloved, nothing will make us willingly to entertaine the message of death, but only the comforts of the life to come. Oh let us labour then for these comforts that so we may be provided against death; were it not a foolishnesse for a man who being a tennant at will, and shortly to be turned out of his house, never to take care for another until he is cast out of doors? Beloved we are all tennants at will and we are  
very

very shortly to be cast out of our dwelling houses of clay, and shall we not provide for a surer habitation? Death is at hand, and our life must shortly have an end; let us therefore labour to be assured of a better life, when this is ended, that so with comfort we may meet with death.

Now we come unto the second point which is here to be considered; taken from the complaint of the Prophet that the people did not consider nor lay it to heart. *viz* the death of the righteous, whence I note, that *The death & losse of good men must be laid to heart as a special cause of grief and sorrow.*

We ought justly to be grieved at the death of a *righteous* man, when God taketh him from amongst us. How did the Prophet *Jeremy* and the people lament the death of that good King *Josiah*, 2 Chron. 35. 23. so devout men made great lamentation for the death of *Stephen*, Act. 8. 2. so all *Israel* lamented the death of *Moses* Deut. 34. 8. And *Joash* the King of *Israel* wept for the death of the Prophet *Elisha*, 2 Kings 13. 14. and thus wee should lament and sorrow for the death of any righteous man, yet not in respect of themselves, as if their case were worse

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now then before, for they are now more happy.

But first, *in regard of Gods glory* whereof they were instruments to set it forth; for since they were taken away, Gods glory is impaired; because there are the fewer left which doe truly serve and worship him; for as *David* saith, *the dead praise not the Lord*, &c. *Psal.* 115. 17. so then they being dead, do not praise the Lord among the faithfull on earth any longer.

Secondly, *in regard of the great losse that others have by their death*, who have alwayes received much good by them in their life; for the gdcly doe so order and behave themselves in all their wayes that they doe good wheresoever they come; therefore when they die, it must needs be a great losse unto such who might if they had lived, been bettered by them.

Thirdly, *we ought to lament the death of the righteous in regard of the evill to come*; for while they live, they are as a wall about us to keep Gods judgements from us; If there had been but *ten* righteous men in *Sodome*, it had not been destroyed *Gen.* 18. 32. If there be a messenger one among a thousand



thousand, saith *Elihu*, to shew unto man his uprightnes, then is God gracious unto him *Job 33. 23.* Run ye to and fro in the streets of *Jerusalem* saith God, and see if you can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgement, and seeks the Lord, and I will pardon it, *Jer. 5. 1.* so that if there had been but one *righteous* man among the people in that city, the Lord would have spared them even for that ones sake; and therefore the Lord speaking of the *righteous*, saith, I will fasten him as a naile in a sure place, he shall be as a glorious throne unto his fathers house. *Esay. 22. 23.* Oh consider then what a losse we have when the *righteous* dye; we are like to perish, when the naile that was in the sure place is remooved, cut downe and falles; for then the burden that was upon it, shall be cut off, *Esay, 22. 25.* You therefore of this Congregation, consider, and lament for this your losse, in that this *good* man is taken from among you; for who knowes whether God spared this congregation even for this good mans sake? for it is the *righteous* only that God respects, and for their sakes he will spare a whole people; therefore surely as *Solomon* saith, the  
righteous

righteous is better then his neighbour, yea though never so poore and despised in the eyes of the world, yet are they *precious* in Gods account; *when I make up my Jewels* (saith God) *I will spare them* Mala. 3. 17. so that the righteous are Gods *Jewels*, the excellent of the earth, are precious in Gods sight; and have we not great cause then to lament for the losse of such?

Vse.

Seeing then it becommeth all Gods children to lament the death of the righteous; O how farre then are all such from the spirit of God, who are so farre from lamenting, that on the contrary they rejoyce at the death of the godly man, because he stood in their way? they could not follow their workes of darknesse as they would, but hee hindered them, he stood in their light, they could not run on in sin and wickednesse, but he would be re-proving, admonishing, and telling them of their faults, and this makes them long for the good mans end, and to rejoyce in it when it doth come; these doe not consider that when the righteous is taken from the earth, then they lie open unto the judgements of God; But as the Sodomites

mites thrust out just *Lot* out of their city, that so Gods vengeance might fall the sooner upon them; for till he was gone, the Lord would not destroy them *Gen. 19.*

21. Even so doe these men desire to bee rid of the righteous, and rejoyce when they are taken from them, not considering that they are open to Gods vengeance which hangerth over their heads ready to devoure them.

We ought then to be most grieved for the death of the righteous, when any of the Saints are taken away by death; Oh what a comfort is a righteous man to the children of God? what a feeling of grace is there in such a one? what comfortable words come there from the mouth of such men? how full of comfortable speeches was this poore man alwayes ministring comfort to those that came to visic him? what a losse is this then unto us? it is more then if thousands of the wicked had gone together; and shall wee not mourne for the losse of such a one? If one of our family or friends dye, wee can mourne for them; and good reason; and shall wee not mourne for the losse of one of Gods Saints, one of the spirituall family, one of

of our fellow members.

In this then examine thy selfe how it is with thee; when thou hearest of any of the faithfull that are taken away, art thou greived for it, dost thou lament and mourn for it? if thou doest not, surely thou art no true Christian; for the children of God cannot choose but lay it to heart and lament, when any of the righteous is taken from among them. As *Israel* lamented the death of *Samuel*. *1 Sam. 25. 1.*

Now concerning the sin of the people in not regarding nor laying it to heart, this was a great sin of *security* in them, in that they did as it were rest on their pillowes and cryed peace unto themselves, notwithstanding Gods judgements upon them, in taking away the righteous, and freeing them from the evill to come, wee note that,

*Doctr.*

*When God will bring any great judgement upon a People or Nation, he will ordinarily take away his faithfull servants from among them, that so they may be freed from the evill to come.* Thus good *Josiah* must perish in his young yeares, that so he might not be taken with the evill to come; I will gather thee unto thy fathers saith God, and thou

thou shalt goe to thy grave in peace, and thy eyes shall not see all the evill that I will bring upon this place. 2 *King.* 22. 20. So when God told *Abraham* of the bondage and captivity whereunto he would bring his posterity, he saith *thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace* Gen. 15. 13. And thus it was with the ancient Father Saint *Augustine*; when the cruell *Vandals* besieged his city, he prayed that the Lord would either take him away, or cause them to leave the siege; and the Lord heard him; and tooke him away, and presently after the *Vandals* destroyed the city. So *Luther* writing upon this text, saith that the Lord after his death would bring great affliction upon *Germany*, and two yeares after it so fell out indeed. Thus ordinarily God takes away his servants from the evill to come.

See here the mercy of God unto his children in that hee takes them away from among the wicked, he calls them out of this world that they may not partake of the evill to come; shall any one then think it a curse to be taken away betimes, in his young yeares? nay happy is hee that is taken away from these miserable and fearfull



fearfull times wherein the judgement of God, for our sins hangeth over our heads; and is ready every day to seize upon us.

Secondly; seeing that God when he meanes to bring any heavy judgement upon a people, doth *ordinarily* take away the righteous from the evill to come, this shewes that when the righteous are taken from amongst us, wee are certainly to expect some judgement of God upon us. For these are they which stood in the gap and kept off the fire of Gods wrath from us, that it should not consume us: but now being gone, wee lie open to the judgements of God; and therefore when any righteous men are taken from us, the losse of them ought to drive us to repentance, least Gods judgements come presently upon us and consume us, therefore we must forsake our sins and evill wayes, and performe new obedience unto God, so will he be mercifull unto us, yea he will bee a shield of defence unto us, and a wall of fire about us, and hee will turne away his judgements from us.

Beloved in the Lord wee are here assembled

sembled to perform this last Christian duty of burial to the Saint of God now deceased, whose soule I am as certainly perswaded is at rest with Christ in glory, as I am sure his body is in this coffin. When I consider those excellent graces that were in him, his great *knowledge* in the word of God, his *love, zeale, patience and humility*; when I consider his excellent *gifts* in comforting, exhorting, admonishing, with his heavenly gift of prayer, &c. and withall consider that he was unlettered, hee could neither write nor read, I cannot but call to mind that in the *Acts. 4. 13.* where it is said of the Priest and Pharisees that they seeing the boldnesse of the Apostles how they answered and spake, perceiving them to be unlearned and ignorant men, they knew that they had been with Iesus: Even so may we know that this our brother had been with Iesus: not in the flesh, but in the spirit, and that from him he received these things, that *book-learning* could never have taught him; for he was a good man and full of the holy Ghost, as it is laid of *Barnabas*; Truly verifying that of the Apostle that God hath chosen the poore of this world, that  
they

they should be rich in faith; he was a true follower of Christ, of whom it is said hee went about doing good; so this Disciple of Christ did good wheresoever he came; how many by him have been stirred up, comforted and admonished and quickened unto good duties, feeding them with the lips of knowledge who fed him with bodily food? how often have I my self through him been stirred up to good duties? how often have I been refreshed and comforted in my heavinesse by this poore man! so lively did he beare the Image, of God in him, that me thought Christ Jesus walked in him alive upon the earth; how much true service, sincere obedience, fervent and faithfull prayer had the Lord out of that poore cottage wherein he lived? If ever there were a true child of *Abraham*, and an heire to the promise, this was hee; if ever there were among us a true *Israelite* in whom there was no guil, this was hee; If ever there were amongst us a true Christian that shined as a light to those amongst whom he lived, this was hee; If ever there were amongst us a poor man rich in faith, this was hee. In his life he was a patterne to all that knew him, so  
contented

contented with his estate; so diligent in the duties of his calling whilst health suffered; In sicknesse untill death whilst speech continued, so comfortable that I never came to him, but I went away bettered by him. O how did hee exhort and stirre up all those that came to visit him, to hold out constantly unto the end, to grow and increase in those good beginnings which they had made? how often and how excellently would he speake of the benefits which wee have by Christ, even the pardon of sin, more like a Divine then a common Christian, and so feelingly did hee expresse the certaine pardon of his owne sin, even the sweete assurance thereof, that it did my heart good to hear him. Often did he deplore the state of these evill times, in which we live, from which the Lord hath now taken him away; Often did hee with tears bewaile the state of this congregation, and their unfruitfulnesse under the ministry of the word. How did hee even with teares pray for his enemies? he had some enemies, but they were such as his piety, religion and care to keep a good conscience made enemies unto him, touching whom I must

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say

say that which without trembling I cannot speak, that as they refused his society while he lived, and sought to thrust him from among them, so I feare that where he now is, they shall never come except they repent. O it is a fearfull thing to hate a man for his religion and piety; but such was his love and compassion towards them, that he did often with teares lament their estate and pray for them. At the mention of death he would still repeat the point not long since delivered; that *he that would have comfort in death, must goe beyond death*; even to that glorious inheritance to the which we are passing through death? and never in my life did I ever see any man so comfortably and contentedly adresse himself to encounter with death as he did. O said he, this is the time that I have long waited for; and as the pangs of death grew neerer, so used he the more comfortable speeches, saying with *Paul*, I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ; now shall I see my sweet Saviour whom I have longed for; and when death was even upon him, he said come Lord Jesus come quickly, and so with admirable patience endured the pangs of death after  
prayer



prayer with him when his speech began to faile, I exhorted him now to look up to his Redeemer, who was ready to receive him into his Masters joy; and I spake something out of the *Revelations*, touching the happy estate of those that die in the Lord, adding further that all this comfort we have by Christ, He answered with these his last words which with much difficulty he spake; saying, blessed be his glorious name, blessed be his glorious name, and thus this faithfull servant of Christ and heire of blessing, gave up his breath in blessing God and died, praising that God to whose praise he had lived. And what should I say more but as *David* said of *Abner*, died *Abner* as a fool dieth? died this our brother as a fool, as a worldling, as a wicked man dieth, of whom no reckoning is to be made? no, precious is his death in the eyes of the Lord, and in the eyes of all that fear the Lord, and blessed shall his memory be, yea all that knew him well, will call him blessed. And for my own part so often as I shall think of his death, and often I must think thereon, my soul shall wish and pray, Oh let medie the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like unto his *Amen.* S 2



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THE  
SIGNES  
OF  
GODS forsaking a people.

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Preached by  
That laborious and faithfull  
Messenger of CHRIST,  
WILLIAM FENNER, Some-  
times Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in  
*Cambridge*, and late Minister  
of *Kochford* in *Essex*.

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Being the last Sermon that he preached.

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# THE SIGNES OF GODS forsaking a people.

JER. 14. 9.

*And we are called by thy Name; leave  
us not.*



Two things (Brethren and beloved in Christ Jesus) are intended and expressed by the holy Prophet from the first verse to the 13. verse.

There is first a *denomination* of a judgement, and that is dearth or famine from the first verse to the seventh.

Secondly



Secondly, the sword is threatned to the thirteenth verse; he will send the famine, then the sword, and he will not bee intreated.

Then in the eighth and ninth verses we have *the importunate prayer of the Church to turne away these judgements*: And the prayer is marvellous sweet, in confession, where they confesse their sins, and seek to God for succour.

First, they desire God that he would not take his providence from them, *why, stayest thou but for a night?* verse the 8, as if they should have said, it is marveilous strange, that thou behavest thy self so like a *stranger*; thou seest our sorrowes, and dost not help us; thou perceivest our troubles, and thou regardest us not; It is strange, it is strange; that the God of Israel stands as a man astonished; that thou that hast heretofore received us, shouldst now stand as a man amazed and astonished, as if thou wert weary of this thy work, and couldst do no more, as if thou shouldst say *Ierusalem cannot be saved, and Judah cannot be succoured.*

Secondly, they desire that God would not take away his presence from them;  
*leave*

*leave us not to our selves say they ; let us see thy face ; though we die, yet let it be in thy presence ; yea though thou help us not, yet it doth us good to look upon our Saviour, and thou canst help us ; and thus you see the arguments wherewith they presse the Lord how, sweet they are, viz.*

First, *thou art the hope of Israel ;* Alas if thou forsake us we are all lost ; our hope is not in the meanes only ; but our hope is in *thee*, leav us not, for thou art the hope of Israel, it is the task that thou hast taken upon thee, leave us not therefore.

Secondly, *thou hast made thy selfe a Saviour*, and now is the time of trouble, therefore now performe what thou hast undertaken.

Thirdly, *thou art in the midst of us*, that is, thou art a great Commander amongst us, alwayes ready to succour us ; and wilt thou now see us perish ? thou art more neer to us then the Ark in the midst of the Campe, 1 *Sam. 4. 6.* As if they should say he lives in the midst o fus, and will hee not save us ?

Fourthly, *we are called by thy name*, and therefore wee have interest in thee, to whom

whom should wives go, but to their husbands? to whom should children go, but to their fathers? to whom should servants go, but to their Masters? to whom then should we go, but to thee our God and Saviour? leave us not therefore and wee will meddle with none but thee.

Secondly, *though God might leave them, yet they beg that he would not*; that is, the *Amen* to their prayers; though thou stand and wilt not help us; yet let us die in thy presence; and this is the great request of the Saints, they desire not to be *left* of God, although God might leave them; whence learne that God might cast off a people.

*Israel* did feare it, and it is that which they prayed against, God might leav them: I doe not say that God *will* cast off his elect ones eternally, but those in outward covenant. see *Esay* 1. verse 2. &c. *Hear O Heavens, Hearken O Earth, I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against mee; The Oxe knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Masters Crib, but Israel hath not known, my People have not understood, &c.* and verse the seventh; *see the judgement; your cities are burnt*  
with

with fire, strangers devoure your land in your presence, and it is desolate like the overthrow of strangers.

There is an *outward* Calling, as well as an *effectuall* Calling; God may *reject*; for *many* are called, but *few* chosen saith our Saviour. My brethren cast your thoughts as farre off, and see what is become of those famous Churches of *Pergamus* and *Thyatira* and the rest mentioned *Rev. I. verse II.* And who would have thought that *Jerusalem* should have been made an heap of stones and a vagabond people? and yet we see God hath forsaken them, shewing us thereby that although God will never forsake his own elect ones; yet hee may forsake such as are in outward covenant with him.

The Lord is said to dis-church or discharge a people *Hosea I. 9.* there God saith call his name *Loammi* for yee are not my people, and therefore I will not bee your God. And as I may so say, he sues out a bill of divorcement; as it was in the old Law, they that had any thing against their wives, they sued out a bill of *divorcement* against them, and so doth God, see *Hosea. 2. 2.* Plead with thy Mother

ther, tell her shee is not my Spouse nor my beloved; but let her cast away her fornications out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts, lest I make her as at the first, that is, as shee was in Egypt, poore and miserable. As if God should now say to *England*, plead, plead with *England* all yee that are my Ministers in the way of my truth, and say unto her, let her cast away her rebellions, lest I leave her as I found her in the day of Captivity and bondage under the blindnesse of popery and superstition.

*Ob.* But how doth God cast off a people?

*Sol.* I answer, first when he takes away his *love* and respect from a people; and as his love, so the *token* of his love, which is his Word and Sacraments, the meanes of salvation.

Secondly, when he takes away his *providence*, I meane when he takes downe his *walls*, that is, his *Magistracy* and *Ministry*.

Thirdly, when in stead of *Councelling* there comes in *Bribing*; and in stead of *true teaching* there comes in *daubing* with



tempered mortar; when God takes away the hedge thereof, *Esay* 5. 5. or the stakes growe rotten and are not renewed then is God going away.

Fourthly, when God takes away the *benefit* of both these helps, they are signes of Gods departure.

*Use* May God un-church or discharge a People and cast a Nation off? Oh then let this reach us to cast off all *security*; for miseries are nigh at hand in all probability; when wee observe what God hath done for us, all things are *ripe* to destruction, and yet we feare it not, but wee promise to our selves safety, and consider not that *England* is ready to be harrowed, and yet wee cannot entertaine a *thought* of *Englands* desolation; when there are so many *hrophefies* in it of its destruction, yet wee cannot be perswaded of it, but in our Iudgements it must not be, it must not be *as yet*; as if it were impossible that God should leave *England*, as if God were a cockering Father over lewd children; God may leave a Nation, and his elect may suffer, and why may not *England*? *Englands* sins are very great, and the greater, because the *meanes* are great,  
and

and our *warnings* are and have been great; but yet our *mercies* are farre greater; *England* hath been a mirrour of mercies; yet now God may leave it, and make it the mirrour of his justice. Look how God spake to the people that did brag of their temple *Jer. 7. 4.* saith God, *Trust not in lying words, saying the Temple of the Lord, this is the Temple of the Lord;* but what saith the Lord by the Prophet in the twelfth and fourteenth verses, *Goe now to my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the beginning, and behold what I did unto it for the wickednesse of my people Israel, &c.* Even so *England*, thou hast the Temple and the Priests; and yet may not God that destroyed *Shiloh*, destroy thee? Goe to *Bohemia*, and from thence to the *Palatinate*, and from thence to other parts of *Germany*; Doe but imagine that you were there or doe but mark what travellers say. Gods Churches are made heapes of stones, and those *Bethels* wherein Gods name was called upon, are now defiled Temples; For Satan and superstition to raigne in, you cannot goe three steps but you shall see the head of a dead man; And goe a little fur-

further, and you shall see the heart pickt out by the fowles of the ayre, or some other sad spectacle? and then surely you will say, *Tylly* hath been here or there; now are these Churches become desolate, and may not *England*? Doe but goe into their Cities and Townes, and there you may see many compassed about with chaines of Captivity, and every man bemoaning himself. Doe but look under a tree, and there you may see a poor fatherlesse child sending out his breath and crying unto his helpleffe Mother; step but a little further, and you shall see the helpleffe Wife, the sad Wife bemoaning her Husband, and this is her misery, she cannot die time enough, but shee shall see greater misery; for either she shall (as she thinks) see her little ones dasht against the stones, or tossed upon the Pikes, or if they live, that then they shall be brought up in Popery, and then shee weeps again, and thinks that if her Husband be dead it is well: But it may be he is upon the rack, or put to some other torment, and then she dies an hundred times before she can die; Thus if you can set your soules in their soules stead, and imagine you were  
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in their condition, and say, may not this be the condition of *England*, and who knowes but it may? O my beloved, be not high minded, but feare; for as we have Gods bountie on the one side, so (for ought I know) we may have his severity on the other side, Pranke not then your selves with foolish imaginations saying, who dare come to hurt *England*? the *Spaniard* hath his hands full, and the *French* are too weak. But beloved be not deluded; who would have thought that *Jerusalem* the Lady city of all Nations, whither the tribes went up to worship, should become a heap of stones and a vagabond people? but yet you see it was, and is to this day; And I pray, why may it not be *Englands* case? Learnetherefore, heare, and feare God, for assuredly God can be God without *Englands* prosperity; Doe not say here are many good Christians; doe you think that God is beholding to you for your religion? surely not: For rather then he will preserve such as professe his name, and yet hate to be reformed; he will raise up of these stones children unto *Abraham*, he will rather go into *Turky* and say unto them, Thou art my people,

people, and I will be your God.

But wilt thou let God goe *England*? are you so content, and will you let Christ goe and God goe? O no, no; lay heart and hands upon him as they did upon *Paul*; every one of you lay hold on him and say thou shalt not goe from us, for we are called by thy name, therefore leave us not; And for my part I will pray that he doth not take his leave of us. Doe you thinke that *Rome* will forsake or part with her Gods? no, they will rather loose their lives, and wilt thou let thy God goe O *England*? plead with thy God and let him not depart, but part rather with thy rebellions.

*Wee are called by thy name, leave us not.*

You see the Church is very importunate to keep God with them, they lay hold on God with Coards of arguments; O thou hope of *Israel*, doe not leave us; they beset God with their prayers, and as it were they watch him at the townes end that he should not goe away; and they say, thou shalt still abide with us, they are importunate that he doe not leave

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them, whence observe, *Doct.* That it is the importunate desire of the Saints of God, still to keepe God present with them.

They cared not so much for sword or famine, as they did for the losse of Gods presence; O Lord, leave us not say they; this was their prayer; and blame them not; for consider what a grief it is that God should stand by and not help them, Good Lord (say they) leave us not, wee cannot abide to thinke that God should leave us, much lesse can we endure to feelee it or taste it; thus they did, and thus the Saints of God should doe, *Exod.* 33. 14, 15. *Moses* saith if thy presence goe not with us, carry us not hence; alas, *Moses* might have gone upon faire termes; yee shall (saith God) possesse the land in peace with prosperity; But what saith *Moses*? though wee might have *Canaan* and all the delights there, yet carry us not hence unlesse thy presence goe with us; this is the stay and the strength that he stickes too. So *Psal.* 80. 18, 19. Turne us again O Lord of hosts, make thy face to shine upon us; here is a man, a *David*, a heart worth gold, hee makes not many suits, but hee comes home, hee sues to the purpose,

pose, makethy face (saith hee) to shine upon us; as if he should have said that is prosperity enough, for it endureth for ever.

But what is the presence of God? In a word, it is the particular favour of God which hee expresseth in his Ordinances, it is all the good and sweetnesse that flowes from the purity of Gods worship, whereby God reveales himselfe unto us. It is not gold, wealth, nor prosperity, that makes God to be our God; for there is more gold in the West *Indies*, then in all Christendome, but it is Gods *ordinances* purely administred that brings Gods presence to a people. God forsooke *Shiloh* because his ordinances were not purely kept there; when the people left the Arke (*viz*) his pure worship, then God left the people; when the Arke of Gods presence was among them, the word in the purity of it, then his face was there, and there God was principally present; hence it was that *Cain* is said to be cast out of Gods presence; because he was cast out from the Church, hee was cast out from Gods ordinances; if a people doe outwardly reforme, and sincerely worship God they

may remaine; if *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* had but *legally* repented, they had remained, they had not been destroyed; And hence it is that the Saints are so urgent for Gods Ordinances in the *purity* of them: But the wicked stay once a Sabbath is enough, and once a week is too much; by this we may see that *England* is ripe; and is shee nor weary of God? nay, shee is fat fed to the slaughter. But it was not so with the Saints and people of God in former times; it was *Dauids* grand request, that hee might *dwell* in the house of the Lord, *Psal.* 27. 4. And *Psalm* the 42. and the first verse hee said, his soule did *pant* for Gods ordinances. Thus you see that the Saints of God are marvellous importunate to keepe God in his ordinances.

*Quest.* But may not a man bee saved without preaching?

*Ans.* I answer, the argument is clear, the Saints maintain God in his ordinances, the want of which is under the penalty of death and damnation, because wee have more need of God in his ordinances than of all the gold in the world; for all the gold in the world will not sa-

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tisfy a hungry man; It is *bread* that hee must have, because hee hath need of it; so the Saints have most need of *God* and of *Christ*; for though they have but ragged coats, and their bodies pincht with hunger, yet God is hee that they stand most in need of. In *Psalme* the 37. and the 25. verse *David* fretted at the prosperity of the wicked; but at the *last* he breaks of kindly, saying, *whom have I in heaven but thee?* As if hee should have said, let them have what they will, I will have nothing but thee. And why so? why? *thou art my strength and my portion forever*; marke, hee saith that God is his strength, yea the strength of his heart, hereby shewing that all the helps in the world cannot help the heart of man, if God and Christ bee wanting; you were as good offer a journey to refresh a weary man, or the ayre to feed a hungry man, as to offer riches, honours and ease to help a distressed soule. These will never help a man; hee may well dote upon them, but his soule and conscience will be galled and troubled still; it must bee the God of peace that must speak peace to troubled soules. It must bee the God

of peace that must speak peace to a distressed soule, to a soule that is damned in it selfe; it is hee that must say, I will bee the strength of their hearts, and their portion for ever; no marvell then if a poor soule cryes to God, when happily the heart is full, when the soul gnaws and cries within it selfe, I am damned, I am damned; happily the palate is pleased with delicates, when the poor soule for ought it knowes must goe down to hell; oh then beloved, if you will have safety, goe where God is; for every good gift comes in with him; if once a man hath got God into his company, hee hath all good things with him. God blessed *Obed Edoms* house for the Arkes sake; now the Arke was a type of Christ, and where it came, many blessings came with it; even so when God comes unto a people they are married unto him in righteousness, in judgement, in loving kindnesse and in mercies for ever, *Hosea 2. 9.* When a man is married to a wife, all is his; so get Christ and all is thine, and then what wouldst thou have more?

God speaks to the *raine*, and it heares; to the *corne*, and it heares; but if thou be  
in



in Christ, hell and death are thy servants; but they that have outward things only, as profits, pleasures or the like, they have their ruine, unless they have Christ with them; get Christ therefore, for if hee be wanting all outward and inward dangers befall that man, or that Nation; woe be unto him or them that are without God. For though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not bee a man left; yea woe also to them, when I doe depart from them; *Ephraim*, as *Tyrus* is planted in a pleasant place: but *Ephraim* shall bring forth his children to the murderer, *Hosea* the 9. 12, 13. verses. True indeed, woe bee unto that heart, County or Kingdome, that God is departed from; when God who is the God of mercies and all consolation, is departed away, who can but pittie that soule, County or Kingdome who will not submit to Gods peace consolation and salvation? when God parts, all miseries follow; for that man that makes no conscience in out-facing God in the Congregation, mark what the text saith *Dent.* 28. 15. I will forsake them, and many miseries shall overtake them, and when the flood gates are

once up, then comes in all evils; And then they shall say, are not these things come upon us because God is not with us? If therefore we would avoid woe and sorrow, slaying and killing one another; if the wife would not see her husband killed before her tender eyes, and the man see his wife snatcht out of the world by the hands of wicked men, then leave not God, but hold him fast, and then evill dayes will depart from us; It is our holding of God that keepes miseries from us; oh then what shall wee think of them that are weary of God, and that say to the Almighty depart from us? *Job 22. 17.*

*Ob. But are there any amongst us that are weary of God? I hope there are none such amongst us.*

I answer, thou that art a servant, and rejectest the Command of thy Master, in it thou doest reject God, and all such as have a mean conceit of the worship of God and the word of God, and thinke that prayer or preaching is continued too long; I say, these men know not what they thinke or say, but certainly it is because they would be freed from the Ordinances of God: well, God will free thee

thee from them one day, I will warrant thee, and then thou wilt bee in a miserable condition; oh that thou wouldest pittie thy poor condition; but thou that art *weary* of Gods ordinances and of his mercies, his presence and patience, know thou that thou shalt bee deprived of Gods goodness, and thy portion shall bee with those that hate God in this life here, and after this life (if thou repent not) thy portion shall bee with them in Tophet where the worme dyeth not, and where the fire goeth not out, and then thy crying will not availe, God will bee God over thee in destruction, yea when he hath spurned thousands and ten thousands into hell, such as thou art, then shalt thou bee the everlasting object of his never dying wrath, then notwithstanding all thy shrill cries, though thou couldest be heard out of that dungeon, yet were thy help never the near; for God is God still. I advise thee therefore what to do, whilst thou art here in this life, make thy peace with God in Christ, and lay thy selfe low before him, and bear patiently his hand in his wrath which thou hast deserved. And marke what I say, thou hast deserved to bee in hell

hell an hundred times, that is the least ; and therefore bee contented with thy condition ; for thou hast chosen death rather than life : and God should wrong himselfe and thee also, if he should not let thee have thy choosing.

Will not these things move you, my brethren? Me thinks I see your colours rise, I am glad of it, I hope it is to a good end ; you may be wise, and happily so wise as to choose life rather then death : Now the Lord grant it , for he delights not in your destruction.

I will adde one word more, to leave the more impression in your hearts ; my desire is the health of your soules ; though my meat seem sowre, yet my minde is the will of God. Thou man or woman, that canst not abide so much Preaching, but standest upon thorns whilst it is preaching : *Too much of one thing* (you say) *is good for nothing* ; You do as much as say you will not have God with you ; you will have a little of God, but you will have more of your pleasures : is this your desire, your delights? Know then, whosoever thou art, that hast an ill will to God and his Ordinances, and wilt not have the gospel in the

The purity of it; thou shalt have thy desires: Thou sayest, *depart Preaching*, and so it shall, thou shalt have thy desires. When thou shalt hear the trumpets sound, and when thine eares shall tingle with the sound of war; then depart for ever, you that are weary of God, get you down to hell for ever: Fulfill your base lusts (then will God say) for I have fed you on earth this twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, nay sixty yeares and upwards, and my milde Word could not rule you nor prevail with you, and therefore now get you to hell, and there remain for ever. Think thus with your selves; will God serve me thus? yea that he will, for he hath prepared a place for the proudest Kings, Princes, Monarchs Captains, &c. that are, or ever were in the world, if they will not be ruled nor guided by God, and his word. See *Isa. 30. 33.* the Text doth as good as say, he delighteth to make bonfires about their eares: And must this be the way to glorifie God?

But some may say, *surely Kings and Monarchs are exempted, they need not fear that such torments shall come upon them.*

To this I answer, that God will say unto them, raign there if thou wilt, and then they



they shall know that there is a King that laughs at their destruction. Take notice of this I beseech you, and reason thus with your own soules: Is he a good sonne that cannot abide the presence of his own father? is she a good wife that cannot abide the company of her husband? and is he a good Christian that cannot endure the company of Christ in his ordinances?

*Vse.*

*This may serue to rebuke Gods people for their neglect.* You see the Gospel is going, Christ is departing, he is going to seek better entertainment. (But I marvaile you give no better attendance; I pray hearken what I say, and have to say, stand up and heare, and the Lord give you grace to believe.) I will deale plainly with you; as sure as God is God, God is going from *England*. Shall I tell you what God told me? nay I must tell you on pain of my life; Will you give eare and believe me? I am a poor Ambassador sent from God to do his message unto you; and although I be low, yet my message is from above, and He that sent me is great, and from above; and oh that He would grant that this my message might be believed! What

*if*

if I should tell you, that God told me (yesternight) that he would destroy *England* and lay it waste? What say you to this, my beloved? it is my message, by meditation in Gods word, that he bid me do to you, and he expects an answer from you: I do my message as God commanded me; what sayest thou unto it, *England*? I must return an answer to my Master that sent me, yea this present night I must return an answer, for the Lord hath appointed a set time, saying, *To morrow the Lord will do this thing in the Land*, *Exod. 9. 5.* Why speak you not? an answer you must give: Do you think well of it? will you have *England* destroyed? will you put the aged to trouble, and your young men to the sword? will you have your your young women widows, and your virgins defiled? will you have your deare and tender little ones tossed upon the pikes and dashed against the stones? or will you have them brought up in Poperie, in idolatrie, under a necessity of perishing their souls for ever, which is worst of all? Will you have these Temples wherein we seeme to worship God, will you have them and your houses burnt with fire, and will you see *England* laid

laid waste without inhabitants? are you well contented it shall be so? I am an importunate suitor for Christ, oh send me not sad away, but speak comfortably and cheerfully, what are you resolved of? Are you willing to enjoy God still, and to have him dwell with you? it is well, *I* am glad of it if it be so; but you must not only say so, but you must use the means, and you must plead importunately with your God: for although his sword be drawn, and in his hand, lifted up and readie to strike; yet suffer him not to destroy, but rather to sheath his sword in the blood of his enemies. *I* would be glad to have *England* flourish still; but if desolation do come, thank yourselves for it, it is your own fault if you bee destroyed, and not Gods, for he delights not in the death of any. We may justly take up the complaint of the Prophet *Esay*, who saith, No man stirreth up himselve to lay hold on God, *Isa. 64. 7.* But this is our comfort, or rather our misery, that we have quiet prosperitie, with ease and commoditie, our bellies full, our coffers full, and our backs curiously clothed, &c. not remembring the afflictions of our neighbour Nations; but all is well

well with us, and it will serve our turnes :  
and if we do humble our selves a little, we  
think it is well. And thus we play mock-  
holiday with God and with his gospel, in  
making it our pack-horse. Well, look to  
it, for God is going, and if he do go, then  
our glorie goes also ; and then we may  
say with *Phineahs* wife, *1 Sam. 4. 22.*  
*Glory is departed from Israel*, so glory is  
departed from *England* ; for *England* hath  
seen her best daies, and the reward of sin  
is comming on apace ; for God is packing  
up of his gospel, because none will buy his  
wares : God begins to ship away his *No-  
ahs*, which prophesied and foretold that  
destruction was neer ; and God makes ac-  
count that *New-England* shall be a refuge  
for his *Noahs* and his *Lots*, a rock and a  
shelter for his righteous ones to run unto ;  
and those that were vexed to see the un-  
godly lives of the people in this wicked  
Land, shall there be safe. Oh therefore  
my brethren, lay hold on God, and let him  
not go out of your coasts ; look about you  
I say, and stop him at the town's-end, and  
let not thy God depart, O *England*, lay  
siege about him by humble and heartie  
closing with him ; and although he be  
going,

going, he is not yet gone; suffer him not to goe farr, suffer him not to say farewell or rather fare ill *England*; therefore because I will doe thus unto thee, prepare to meet the God of *Israel O England*. Amos 4. 12. Now God calls upon thee, as he did sometime upon *Jerusalem* Jer. 6. 8. Bee thou instructed therefore *O England*, least my soule depart from thee, and least I make thee desolate like a Land that none inhabiteth; and thus we see what the godly have done before us, and now let it bee our Coppie, and let us with *Mary* claspe close about Christ; they have broke the Ice, let us follow them: this is our day of atonement; this present day is ours, wee have nothing to doe with tomorrow; wee are at odds with God; and this is the day of our reconciliation; this is the day wherein we are to make our peace with our God; and to end all controversies, let us labour therefore to prevail with God, and that we may not lose his presence, doe as the spouse *Cant.* 3. 1. she sought him, but she could not find him, yet she gave not over but shee followed him till she found him; So our God is going, and shall we sit still? would

you



you have the Gospel kept with lazie wishes, Oh no, no; arise, arise from your downy beds, and fall down upon your knees, and intreat God to leave his Gospel to you and to your posteritie; shall wee by our sins disinherit our Infants and posteritie of such a blessing which is or should bee the life of there lives? and so have them brought up in superstition? no, no; Lord we cannot abide this, Oh give us neither wealth nor any other blessing but thy Gospell; this is our Plea Lord; and when have found God then let us bring him home to our houses, and there reraine him, that so he may be our God and the God of our posterity, in all our and their afflictions; and this will make you to rejoyce exceedingly; Oh my beloved carry God whom with you, and let him be a Father to you and to your posterity.

*Quest. But how may wee keep the Lord, it would be worth our labour; for at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

*Ans.* First, wee must be sure to prepare a room for him; for he is a King, and a King you know sends his harbinger before

fore him to prepare a roome for him ; saying come out of her my people and touch no unclean thing, and then I will be thy God and thou shalt be my people 2. *Cor.* 6. 17. so my beloved brethren, come out of all sinfull courses, pleasures, and practises, and you may expect Gods comming unto your houses ; And when you sit downe by your fires, or lie downe in your beds, think thus with your selves, what an equall condition doth God propound, it is but only to part with a sin, a lust, a Dalilah, which I may very well spare, as well as I may spare water out of my shooes, or a coale out of my bosome ; I say thinke thus with thy selfe and say in thy heart, will God keep Company with mee, if I will not keep Company with sin? are the termes no harder? this is a good offer ; I will at once then bid sin adue ; for now I am upon another bargain ; here is an offer that I was not aware of ; I will quickly dispatch this bargain and make my peace with my God ; and thus if you would have God to bee yours, then let your soules and bodies be his by forsaking all sins ; and when you shall call, God will come and say here am I, *Esay.* 58. 9.

Second-

Secondly, as you must prepare a room for God, so you must *give him content* too; let God have his will, crosse him not. Where the King is, he will have all things to his minde, even so it is with God, If he may have his own worship, you please him wonderous well; you must dresse his dishes according to his tooth; but if you put poyson into his meat, if you mingle the traditions of men with Gods worship, then you *discontent* him. Lay aside therefore all your superstitions, and erroneous opinions of God and his worship, and do it according to his *will* in his word *revealed*, and then you please him indeed; when a Nation or a soule submits to God and to his truth in all things. To bow at the name Jesus, is not meant at the *word* Jesus; for so to give him the bow is to commit syllabicall Idolatrie; but the meaning is, wee should worship him in spirit and in truth, humbly subjecting our selves unto Christ.

Thirdly, as we must give him his mind, so wee must give him *welcome*, if you displease God and look loweringly or sowerly upon him, and grudge at God or at his truth, no wonder then if God goe away; and surely this is the signe of *England*,

we bear an ill will unto God and his word, and God hath done well for this Land, and what could hee have done more then hee hath done for this Land, as hee saith of his vineyard? *Esay* 5. 4, 5. but it brought forth contrary fruit; even so wee doe all contrary to Gods expectation; mark therefore what God saith, hee will take away the hedge, and it shall be trodden down; and for ought that may be collected, so it is like to bee with us, if his mercy prevent it not; for, are wee better than the old world? the same sins that were found in the old world, are found in us; *Sodom's* and *Gomorahs* sinnes were but strawes in respect of ours; and yet God rained down fire and brimstone upon them; tell me, are there not as great sinnes amongst us as were in *Jerusalem*, who were carried captives, their city destroyed, and they a vagabond people untill this day? Are we better then other Brethren and neighbour Nations, that have drunk so deeply of Gods wrath? I tell you truly, we are a burden to God, he cannot long beare us, and he will think his burthen well over when he hath destroyed us. You know all men are glad when their *pain* is over;

even

even so it is with God, we are a pain and a trouble unto him and why should God go continually pained with us, which are worthy to be destroyed? Then shall *England* seek peace, but shall not find it, God shall not pity us: Oh, my beloved brethren, what a pitifull thing it is, when a mercifull God shall shew himself unmercifull? when his patience shall be turned into impatience? There is a hard time ere long befalling *England*, if God in mercy prevent it not; but we do not consider it, lamentable is our time. Christ wept over Jerusalem; Oh (saith he) *that thou hadst known in this thy day of visitation, the things that do concern thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes* Beloved, what do you think we shall do, when Gods mercies are turned into justice? Look to it *England*, the Lord hath wept over thee in mercy many years; What shall we do when we have leisure to consider what once we did enjoy? for Gods patience is never truly prized, till we want it; and then the poor soul will thus say: There was a time when we might have been at peace with this patient God, but now he is hid from our eyes, now the gate is shut, barred and locked up.

And



thus when a people doth *abuse* Gods mercy hee sends the contrary judgements, and then it will grieve and wound our soules to think what once wee did enjoy; but that soule that will bid God *welcome* to his heart, may goe *singing* to his grave.

Fourthly, *You must be importunate with God to tarry, and account it a great favour if he will stay:* For God hath roome enough in heaven, and therefore you need not lodge him for want of lodging, but you must be beholding to him to tarry with you (yet in these dayes men doe not love to be beholding;) *Jacob* wrestled with God, and by that meanes he held him till he blessed him: you live under the *meanes*, and know the way, and will you not doe it? what greater condemnation can there be, and how great will your judgement be unto you, more then unto them that have no *meanes*? and as it was said of *Caper-naum*, so say I to *England*, Thou *England* that was lifted up to heaven with *meanes*, shalt be brought down to hel; thou shalt be *abused* for it; for if the mighty works which hath been done in thee, had been done in India or Turkie, they would have repented ere this time, And there-  
fore

fore *Capernums* place is *Englands* place, which is the most scaldings tormenting place of all, if it repent not; And marke what I say, the poore native Turks and Infidels shall have a more coole summer ParLOUR in hell then *England* shall have, for we stand upon high rates; therefore thy torment shall be the more intollerable to bear.

Now the Lord write these things in our hearts by the finger of his holy spirit for his Christs sake, under whom I would we were all covered. Amen.

FINIS.

